

The University of Chicago

ETHICS AND ETHICAL RELIGION  
IN GREEK LITERATURE AND  
THE OLD TESTAMENT

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED  
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF  
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK LANGUAGE  
AND LITERATURE

1933

By

STELLA LOUISE LANGE

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Certain footnotes on pages 181,  
192, 193, 209, 218, 220, 223, 224,  
and 237 contain references to the  
complete dissertation, to be found  
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## CHAPTER VI

### JOB AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

The central problem of all ethics and ethical religion is the relation of righteousness to happiness and the connection between suffering and sin. We have touched on this from time to time in connection with the psalms, the prophets and the wisdom writers. But it deserves a more detailed treatment. There is one book in the Old Testament concerned wholly with this problem and also of interest because of its supposed (by many critics) relation to Greek literature.

The book of Job possesses that charm and attractiveness lent to a literary composition by its vague suggestiveness and the fact that it must always remain a problem. It is so easy to read into doubtful verses the thoughts that they suggest to us and to make them mean what we should like them to mean. So Job becomes all things to all men, as in a somewhat different fashion and to a lesser degree the choruses of Euripides have become the material for beautiful and ingenious paraphrases by different writers.<sup>1</sup> Even its literary form is much disputed and the question whether it is epic, drama, dialogue, symposium or a mixture of several of these is still debated. The only thing certain is that it is, as we have it, a combination of prose and poetry, of narrative and

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<sup>1</sup> Its popularity can to some extent be seen from the list of interpreters enumerated in part by Morris Jastrow, The Book of Job, (Philadelphia, 1920) p.14. They include "from ... Ibn Ezra, Kimchi and Rashi to Ewald, Renan, Dillman, Duham, Budde, Graetz, Cheyne, Szold, Genung, Delitzsch, Siegfried, Peake, Cox, Barton, Strahan, Blake, Ehrlich, Driver, Gray, and Battenwieser, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;" and others have been added since.

speeches. Most scholars agree that the poet used an older folk-tale, of the righteous man Job, as the foundation or frame of his composition, - as Goethe did in *Faust* - though even his procedure there is doubtful. Did the poet use a written form of the folk-tale as the prologue and epilogue, simply inserting his poem between,<sup>1</sup> or are the prologue and epilogue his own composition, merely suggested by the old tale?<sup>2</sup>

Most scholars recognize a certain dramatic element in the book, though Genung calls it an epic of the inner life; and it has indeed some of the characteristics of the epic, a hero who meets with unusual adventures, superhuman characters involved in the action (God and Satan), and a lofty style. Cheyne (*Job and Solomon*, pp.109-10) compares it with *Paradise Lost*, which he says it resembles in its purpose of attempting to "justify the ways of God to man."<sup>3</sup> However, practically all the action is concentrated in the prologue, and the body of the work is composed of a series of speeches, which is certainly not characteristic of the epic, though Eduard König (*Das Buch Hiob*, Gütersloh, 1929) pp.17-18, who calls it "episch-didaktisch" remarks that other epics also contain dialogue.<sup>4</sup>

As to its dramatic nature, opinions vary from the conservative statements of Sellin, Schmidt, Cheyne, Buttenwieser and

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<sup>1</sup>So e.g. Budde, Duhm and others. Cf. also E. Sellin, *Das Problem des Hiobbuches*, Leipzig, 1919, pp.22-5; Hans Schmidt, *Hiob, Das Buch vom Sinn des Leidens*, Tübingen, 1927, p.45.

<sup>2</sup>So M. Buttenwieser, *The Book of Job*, New York, 1922, p.5.

<sup>3</sup>He also compares Job with the hero of the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic (*Encycl. Bibl.* 1901, col. 2464.)

<sup>4</sup>Dillmann styles it an "episch-dramatisches Lehrgedicht." Dr. Mason Good and M. Godet also call it epic. Cf. also Milton, *Reason of Church Government*, "... epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer and those other two of Tasso are a diffuse and the book of Job a brief model."



others to the daring attempt of H. M. Kallen to present it as a full-fledged Euripidean drama. Schmidt (op. cit. p.41) says that the poet, like Goethe, made an old tale the vehicle of his struggle with a problem, and in both cases something like a drama grew out of it. Sellin (op. cit. p.43) refers to the occasional classification of Job as a drama and says, "This is of course impossible, but it did in fact become a dramatic poem." He adds that at the time of its composition the drama was evidently in the air, but the book is not itself a drama. Bittenwieser (op. cit. p.38) says it is, "Not, to be sure, a finished drama conforming to set rules of structure as in the Greek and the modern sense of the term, but a true drama, none the less, in spirit and purpose," and that it does not belong with the wisdom literature, which, unlike Job, is didactic.<sup>1</sup> W. G. Jordan (The Book of Job, Its Substance and Spirit, New York, 1929, pp.67 ff.) admitting that the book has a certain dramatic unity and could be set upon the stage, says decidedly, "But in the life of the Hebrews the theatre played no part and this book was never meant to be acted. The monotheism of the Hebrews, says Professor Jordan, made a development on their part of plastic art and the drama impossible. The Hebrew genius was subjective, not objectively creative, and there is nothing in the Old Testament to compare with Sophocles or Shakespeare, even though we find the germs of drama in many passages of the Old Testament."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>He notes that the combination of epic with dramatic form is common in mediaeval miracle plays and occurs also in Peele's Old Wives' Tale.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. in the festive processions and religious rites, the liturgy that made use of questions and answers (Ps. 24), wedding and funeral celebrations. Cf. also Jud. 11.39 and Jer. 22.18. In some of these instances those taking part impersonated another, so the women who each year bewailed the daughter of Jephthah.

König rather amusingly cites as an argument against the book's being a drama the fact that the seven days' silence of the friends could not be represented on the stage, nor could the appearance of God, and someone behind the scenes would have to recite the narrative parts.<sup>1</sup> But many others call it a drama or at least dramatic in quality. Willem Swart (De Invloed van den Griekschen Geest op de boeken Spreken, Prediker, Job) says Job is a Jewish drama, a rough drama in its first stage of development, though it has no progress of action and the dénouement or theophany is awkward and seems to make the long preceding arguments useless.<sup>2</sup> He thinks that the Hebrew genius was not so one-sided that it could not develop different literary genres without foreign influence, and the book of Job shows what it could have accomplished if it had not been stifled by the growing orthodoxy and pedantry of the scribes.<sup>3</sup> In Job we see the Jew becoming conscious of his dramatic genius. The book is in great contrast to the Alexandrian Hebrew dramas of the so-called Ezekiel, which were definitely modelled on the Greek.<sup>4</sup>

The attempt of Kallen is very interesting even though it may not be convincing, for it is in a sense the culmination of a

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<sup>1</sup>He is evidently unacquainted with Kallen's book.

<sup>2</sup>F. Delitzsch in his commentary calls it a drama, as does Szold, Das Buch Hiob, xvii; J. Ley in N. J. Philol. u. Päd. 1896, 125 ff. a "dramatisches Seelengemälde," S. Landersdörfer in Bibl. Stud. XVI, 1911, 2. 91 a "Lesedrama", Moulton, "A dramatic poem framed in an epic story."

<sup>3</sup>Cheyne, Job and Solomon, p.108, approvingly quotes Bunsen, "Hiob ist ein semitisches Drama... Das Dramatische windet sich aber erst aus dem Epos heraus ohne eine selbständige Gestalt zu gewinnen," (Gott in der Geschichte I. 291). Cf. also H.Schmidt, op. cit. p.50, who says it is a little of each, epic, religious lyric and drama, not a regular drama, but "ein erster grosser Versuch eines solchen noch mit einem Teil seines Wesens in der erzählenden Dichtung steckend."

<sup>4</sup>Forbes Phillips, Nineteenth Century, Sept. 1906, thinks Job was influenced by the Electra of Euripides, and also sees in it traces of Aeschylus and Sophocles.



tendency extending through the centuries. Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) excluded the book of Job from his Bible on the ground that its author had made of the pious old story a drama after the fashion of the Greek poets, inventing the speeches. The theory was condemned at Constantinople in 553. In 1587 Theodore Beza in a course of lectures on Job in Geneva divided the book into acts and scenes. Robert Lowth, in his Praelectiones de sacra poesi Hebraeorum (Oxford, 1753) says that in his time most scholars treated the book as a drama with acts, catastrophe, and deus ex machina. Lowth compared it with the Oedipus Coloneus of Sophocles and tested it by Aristotle's Poetics, concluding that it was no true drama since it lacked dramatic action. This argument is also advanced by Nathaniel Schmidt (The Messages of the Poets, pp.78 ff.) who says that there is neither action nor progression of thought in the speeches.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kallen makes no definite attempt to answer objections but boldly takes the bull by the horns and recasts the book into the form which he thinks it originally possessed, that of a Euripidean drama.<sup>2</sup> The first two chapters form the prologue, the last chapter vv. 7-17 the epilogue. Job, the hero, is in a situation similar to that of Euripides' Bellerophon. The speeches form the agon. Elihu is the leader of the chorus.<sup>3</sup> The play is composed of four acts separated by choruses, ch. 28, the first chorus, on the elusiveness of wisdom, properly belonging at the end of the first act; ch. 24, on the fate of the wicked, at the end of the second act, and the description of behemoth and levia-

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<sup>1</sup>Likewise G. Bickell, Das Buch Job (Wien, 1894) p.10.

<sup>2</sup>The question of the poet's sources is considered infra pp. 189 ff.

<sup>3</sup>He also takes the part of the messenger.

than at the end of the third, preceding the speeches of Elihu. In the appearance of God we have the Euripidean deus ex machina to save an intolerable situation. Jastrow (op. cit. pp. 174 ff.) calls Kallen's view arbitrary and uncritical. He says that while the situation is dramatic, this is likewise the case with many other Old Testament stories. Job could be made into a drama but it is not a drama. He classifies it as a composite philosophical poem.

It seems somewhat futile to attempt to classify the book exactly under any of our literary genres. In a sense it is unique in the Bible. The first two chapters are narrative, recalling the books of Jonah, Ruth, Esther, Judith and Tobit, and the narrative is picked up again in the last chapter. The body of the book is a series of speeches, each introduced merely by a sentence, "And Job answered and said," "Then answered Eliphaz and said," with a somewhat more elaborate introduction in the case of Elihu (ch. 32. 1-6). Now speeches, or rather discussions, in a narrative frame are what we have in a number of the Platonic dialogues,<sup>1</sup> though in these the narrative is in the first person and is not as extended as in Job. But Job is not a dialogue in the Platonic sense, not dialectical,<sup>2</sup> for the discussion is not carried on by means of question and answer, but in set speeches, the very thing that the

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<sup>1</sup>Republic, Charmides, Lysis, Parmenides, Symposium, Protagoras, Eryxias, Erastae.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Renan, Le Livre de Job (Paris, 1865) pp. lxxv-lxvi: "La forme du dialogue qui, entre les mains de Socrate, devint pour l'esprit grec un si admirable instrument de précision, ne sert ici qu'à voiler le défaut de méthode rigoureuse. D'un bout à l'autre du poème la question ne fait pas un seul pas; nulle trace de cette dialectique souvent subtile, mais toujours singulièrement pressée, dont les dialogues de Platon et les soutras bouddhiques nous offrent de modèle..."



Platonic Socrates frequently refuses to do.<sup>1</sup> Moreover in the Platonic dialogues there is in practically every case a leader, usually Socrates, in the Sophist and Politicus the Eleatic stranger, in the Laws the Athenian, — who holds the reins of the argument in his hands and guides it in the proper direction. In the book of Job there is no such leader, certainly not Job or any of the friends, and consequently we have a feeling of uncertainty and diffuseness throughout the speeches, of going round in a circle and not following out the thread of the argument logically. It might be said that in the minor Platonic dialogues too we end in ἀπορία, but still we feel a purpose even here, feel that Socrates convicts his interlocutor of ignorance in order to prepare the way for a solution, and in the greater dialogues, the Gorgias, the Phaedo, the Republic and the Laws, there is no uncertainty, but a definite, though not dogmatic, answer to the problem.

We do have extended speeches in some of the dialogues, e.g. the Protagoras, the Gorgias, and especially the Symposium, which, as far as literary form goes, is perhaps nearest to the book of Job. There too we have a series of speeches by different speakers, treating one subject from various points of view,<sup>2</sup> though the subjects in the two cases are utterly unlike, and Plato's dialogue possesses a variety and a dramatic vividness

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Gorg. 449 B, Protag. 334 CD, Hipp. Minor 373 A.

<sup>2</sup> Jastrow, op. cit. p.177 says Job may be called a composite Symposium, and p.180 refers to Plato in connection with the dialogue form of Job, as does Nathaniel Schmidt, op. cit. Cf. Wellhausen apud M. Friedländer, Griechische Philosophie im Alten Testament, p.12; O. Holtzmann apud Friedländer, p.121, "Wir haben es hier ohne Zweifel mit einer hebräischen Nachbildung des philosophischen Dialogs bei Plato zu tun. Nun erinnere man sich, wie auch Plato über die Ursachen des menschlichen Leidens nachgedacht hat, und wie auch ihm die Grösse und Schönheit der Welt vor Augen stand." Bickel, op. cit. p.10 says that perhaps Job is "mit der arabischen Makame oder Musamara (Nächtlichen Unterredung) zu vergleichen."

that the book of Job does not possess, and the latter in turn has a solemnity and high seriousness which can be matched in Plato perhaps only by the Laws and portions of the Republic and Gorgias. The three friends of Job are after all not very sharply differentiated, though we gather that Eliphaz is old and that Zophar is more violent than the other two. Elihu, we are told, is younger than all the others and modestly waits until the three have been silenced, yet he speaks to Job as sharply as they did,<sup>1</sup> and is evidently as piously orthodox as they. One interlocutor might have been represented as conversing with Job without making us lose much dramatic effect. The speeches are not integrated and sharply defined as are those in Plato's Symposium. They have more of the maxim or sententia nature which is so characteristic of Hebrew literature<sup>2</sup> and it is this which probably caused the book of Job to be most frequently classified with the wisdom literature. Some of the speeches of Job might have been taken out of Proverbs, while others are very similar to some of the Psalms.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Battenwieser says that the speeches of Job "do not set forth abstract truth or morality per se as do the dialogues of Plato" but "unroll before our eyes the conflict waged in the soul of a man whom we feel to be a living sentient human being like ourselves." However to some readers the Socrates of the Apology, Crito and Phaedo is as vividly personal and probably more admirable than Job, though his language is less emotional and "dramatic" than that of Job in some passages.

It is true that in the dramas of Euripides also and to a

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<sup>1</sup>Ch. 34.1-9 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Renan, Le Livre de Job, p. lxvi.

<sup>3</sup>Renan thinks these contemporary.



lesser degree in those of the other dramatists we have didactic and moralizing speeches as well as sententiae from time to time,<sup>1</sup> yet they are intermingled with action to an infinitely greater extent, and there is progression to a climax. The only one of extant Greek tragedies with which we might plausibly compare Job is the Prometheus of Aeschylus. There too we have no action after Prometheus has been nailed to the cliff by Kratos and Bia, only different characters coming by design or accident to converse with him: the nymphs, Io and Oceanus, to whom he describes his undeserved sufferings, his past benefactions and the ingratitude of Zeus.<sup>2</sup> And in both the climax or rather conclusion comes in a storm, but God appears to silence Job with his greatness, while Prometheus is engulfed by the earthquake.

Yet there are differences too. Prometheus is more nearly the peer of Zeus, his struggle has been on more equal terms, and indeed in wisdom and knowledge he seems to surpass Zeus, knowing what the latter does not know and gloating over this knowledge and the future fall of Zeus. Zeus too is portrayed in the Prometheus as the embodiment of selfish power and jealousy while Jehovah, in spite of his school-masterly quizzing of Job on his appearance, is represented throughout most of the speeches as morally just, and shows no hostility toward Job.<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Schmidt, remarking on the similarity frequently found between the Prometheus and Job, reminds us that the Prometheus is only part of a trilogy in which there was probably a definite progression of action. Jastrow

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. supra p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Prom. 200 ff. with Job chs. 29-31.

<sup>3</sup>Hans Schmidt, pp. 48-9 says that Job's complaints remind us of Prometheus, but there is this difference in Job that "der gegen die Gottheit aufbegehrende wird hier nicht vernichtet ... er wird von Gott gelobt."

p.185 remarks that the comparison of Job with Prometheus naturally suggests itself. In both characters we have the same rebellious spirit; but the Greek dramatist approaches the subject differently. Prometheus defies the gods while Job is devout and pious until stricken with severest suffering. In the Prometheus the hero is punished for assisting humanity in its progress and the gods are represented as jealous of their powers and afraid lest man become independent. There is nothing of this in Job.<sup>1</sup> As Jastrow says, "The scepticism in Job presupposes the development of the god idea along ethical lines." The very idea of God as all powerful as well as all righteous creates the dilemma, the problem of the book.

It is fairly safe to conclude that the book of Job does not correspond exactly to anything in Greek or modern literature. The attempts of those who would fit it to any such pattern are interesting and suggestive, yet they are incapable of definite proof. We cannot say what the author or authors of Job intended to make of the composition; we can only take it as we have it, and find by comparing it with epics, dramas and dialogues that it has interesting analogies with all, and even, in the prologue and epilogue, with the novel or short story, but the differences are equally perceptible, unless we have a theory to prove and consequently emend, cut, rearrange, and insert, with more or less plausibility, to make the book what we think it to have been.

The question of the literary form is to some extent bound up with the consideration of the unity of the work, the date and manner of its composition and the sources from which the writer

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<sup>1</sup>A hint of the same idea, however, says Jastrow, is found in Genesis 3.22, where after the fall of man God is represented as saying, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever ... "

or writers derived inspiration. On these matters also opinions are widely divergent. Was Job the work of one man or several or of a large group? Was it written as a whole or built up bit by bit, and what was the original nucleus? Was the author wholly original or did he model his work on some older Hebrew or Babylonian or even Greek composition, and when did he write? All these questions have been variously answered. The date is placed all the way from patriarchal times to the second century B.C., but most recent critics place it in the sixth or fifth century, in the time of the Babylonian captivity or the following century.<sup>1</sup> Renan (Le Livre de Job pp.xv-xliii) makes out a fairly strong case for a relatively early date, the eighth century B.C. Mr. Büttenwieser, whose discussion of the date is perhaps more lucid and logical than most others, bases his argument on the thought content of the book, its individualism and the absence of a fixed belief in a resurrection, and fixes 400 B.C. as the approximate date.

Only very conservative or orthodox critics hold that the book of Job, as we have it, was composed at one time and by one man. The prevailing opinion seems to be that the colloquies of Job and the three friends with the framework of the story formed

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<sup>1</sup>Bickel, op. cit. p.10 places it at the beginning of the exile or shortly before; so Hans Schmidt, op. cit. p.49. Ewald, Magnus, Bleek, Kuenen, Hitzig, Reuss, Dillmann and Merz place it in the period between Isaiah and Jeremiah. König, op. cit. p. 495 dates it in the time of Jeremiah (597-520); Cheyne during the captivity (op. cit. p.71). So A. B. Davidson. Kallen places it in the latter part of the fifth century, as does Jastrow. Friedländer, one of the most radical, puts it at the beginning of the third century B.C.

The different critics base their arguments on such matters as the style, the language, parallels with other Old Testament books, the religious tone, the attitude toward foreigners, etc., all of which are more or less uncertain. Even the argument from the thought content is not absolutely certain, since there is always the possibility that a poet may be in advance of his age or may be dramatically portraying an earlier period.



the original composition and that the speeches of Elihu<sup>1</sup> and perhaps other shorter passages are later additions. But there are innumerable modifications of this general view.<sup>2</sup> Jastrow vigorously defends his theory that Job, even in its original form, is not the work of a single author. No Old Testament book, he says, except probably Esther, a propagandist romance, perhaps not earlier than 100 B.C. "can be assigned to any individual author, as none represents in its present form a genuine literary unity."<sup>3</sup> He holds that the colloquies of Job and the three friends are the composite product of a circle of independent thinkers. This 'Symposium' was taken up and amplified by orthodox circles.

Of all the varying theories proposed one can only say that they are not impossible, for there is not sufficient conclusive evidence either to prove or disprove them. It is undoubtedly true that the book of Job, like the great majority of biblical books, does not have the unity and logical coherence that we expect in a modern work or a Greek philosophical or dramatic compo-

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<sup>1</sup>A few, however, defend them, e.g. Cornil and Budde, who think that without them the book gives no answer to the problem of suffering.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. for some of these Sellin, op. cit. pp.22 ff.; Cheyne, op. cit. pp.40 ff., 91 ff.; Battenwieser, pp.5 ff., Hans Schmidt, p.51; Jordan pp. 45 ff. Sellin and Cheyne think the epilogue unworthy of Job's high thoughts in the poem, but Cheyne would smoothe over the difficulty by suggesting that the epilogue is allegorical, Job there representing Israel. He even believes that prologue and epilogue must be the work of two different authors. Sellin holds also that the speeches of God as we have them were not in the original, as they form a kind of anticlimax. Mr. Battenwieser believes the prologue an integral part of the original composition. A great poet would not attach a foreign body to his work without harmonizing the two. Perhaps his most interesting contribution to the question is the theory (p.61 ff.) that the speeches of God were originally addressed not to Job but to the friends and formed the culmination of the drama. He too believes that a later hand added the epilogue.

<sup>3</sup>He says (p.50), "Greek literature ... may be said to have invented the author."

sition, but whether this is due to multiplicity of authorship or to the difficulties of the Hebrew text and the displacement of verses and even of longer passages, or to the fact that the Hebrew genius is emotional rather than logical, we cannot definitely determine.<sup>1</sup> Most readers of the Bible accept this characteristic without much thought, for they usually read their Bible not by books but by isolated passages or chapters and do not as a rule think of relating these passages to a whole or even of tracing a logical coherence, or at any rate more than a very superficial coherence, in the thought. Biblical scholars and critical commentators, like classical scholars, are often prejudiced in one way or another by their theories or their orthodox beliefs, so that the student of literature encounters here problems more complicated than those found in dealing with Greek or Latin literature.

Another interesting problem is the relation of the book of Job to Greek and other ancient literatures. On this topic also much has been written. As to its relation with Babylonian, Egyptian and other Oriental literature we cannot go into detail. Cheyne (p.96) says that some think Job a translation from the Arabic because of some Arabisms in the text, and the parallels between the descriptions in Job and the Arabic poets. But perhaps, he says, the author had travelled in Arabia and enriched his vocabulary from Arabian sources. There is a Babylonian poem, the story of Shubshi Meshri Nergal, a pious king who is suddenly stricken with a terrible disease but ultimately restored to health. This poem has sometimes been considered a source of the Job story. It is fully discussed by S. Landersdorfer, Eine Babylonische Quelle für das Buch Job, and also by Jastrow, A Babylonian Paral-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Renan, Livre de Job, pp. xliv-xlv.

lel to the Story of Job (Journ. Bibl. Lit. XXV, 135 ff.) both of whom reject the theory of a connection. König (op. cit. pp. 20 ff.) prints a translation of the poem and denies any borrowing or dependence, because the external circumstances of the two heroes are entirely different, and the inner situation or problem is so natural that it could arise quite independently among different peoples.<sup>1</sup>

There is also an Egyptian poem, the discourse between a man weary of life and his own soul, in which some have seen a relation with Job, but this fragment is not a narrative, merely a monologue expressing pessimistic reflections.<sup>2</sup> Cheyne (pp. 76 ff.) notes the employment by the author of Job of bits of mythology, perhaps borrowed from Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, to ornament his poem,<sup>3</sup> but adds that these may well have been taken from Jewish popular beliefs and not necessarily from other peoples.

Connection has also been suggested between Zoroastrianism and Job and especially between the Satan of the prologue and Ahriman, the power of evil. Jastrow (p. 181) thinks it possible that there may be some connection, as the Jews must have come

<sup>1</sup> Similarly Büttenwieser p. 4. König says also that Cheyne's comparison of Job with the hero of the Gilgamesh epic (Enc. Bibl. 1901, col. 2464) is not to be taken seriously.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Büttenwieser p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. "the fool-hardy giant (K'sil=Orion) in 9.9, 38.31... the dim allusion to the sky-reaching mountain of the north, rich in gold (cf. Is. 14.13)... the myth-derived synonyms for Scheol, Death, Abaddon, and 'the shadow of death' (or deep gloom) 26.6, 28.22, 38.17, also the king of terrors 18.14, who like Pluto or Yama rules in the Hebrew underworld... A primitive myth has died down into a metaphor, e.g. the eyelids of the Dawn 3.9, 41.18 and ... 38.12-15." Cf. also Jordan, p. 70-1, who adds the reference to Leviathan in 3.7-8, which he says perhaps refers to Babylonian mythology but may be independent, and Rahab the sea-monster in 26.12, 13, which is Babylonian. 38.7 may also, he thinks, be a lingering trace of an early belief in the divinity of the stars. (Cf. infra p. 318).



into contact with Zoroastrianism during the Persian rule.<sup>1</sup> But he says that we cannot go beyond the assumption that Zoroastrianism may have helped to focus the dilemma and led to further development of Satan from the adversary of Job and Zechariah into the later devil.

The question of a relation between Job and Greek literature depends first of all upon its date. If the book dates from the sixth century or earlier, connection is a priori extremely unlikely; if we put it in the fifth century a relation is possible though not very probable; if it could be brought down to the end of the fourth century or later, Greek influence would be far more likely. We have no direct evidence of borrowings between Greek and Oriental literature before the Hellenistic period, but there was undoubtedly contact between Greece and Egypt and Greece and Persia in the sixth century. The Jews had by this time been removed into the captivity and some scattered through Persia and Egypt, so that it is not entirely impossible that some Greeks and Jews should have encountered each other and consequently each other's literature, but this possibility is so remote that it must always remain in the realm of the conjectural and legendary. There is no actual mention of the Jews in any classical literature before Theophrastus.

In the fifth and early fourth century the two peoples were probably known to each other, though whether sufficiently known for literary borrowing remains extremely doubtful. Herodotus does not mention the Jews but he mentions Palestine a number of

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<sup>1</sup>So Isaiah 45.7, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things" is sometimes said to reflect the position of the extreme monotheist against the division brought in by the Persian system with its dualistic nature.

times as a part of Syria and in connection with Phoenicia.<sup>1</sup> Kallen (p.13) mentions the fact that Thucydides speaks of an Athenian army of occupation that spent ten years in Egypt, where they would be quite likely to meet with Jews, and also thinks that contacts of Greek colonials and Ionian merchants with Jews in Syria were inevitable. Aristotle mentions Palestine several times but very vaguely. In the Meteorology he tells about the dead sea, evidently reporting something he has heard, and he doesn't seem to trust the story. There is no evidence at all that he knew the Jews. The tale of Aristotle's meeting a Jew who was a Greek in spirit as well as in language, was attributed by Josephus to Aristotle's pupil Clearchus and is almost certainly an invention, whether of Josephus or of some Jew of the Alexandrian period, or possibly of Clearchus himself.

In the second half of the fourth century the conquests of Alexander carried Greek civilization over the whole Orient and thereafter there can be no doubt that Greek thought and Greek ways became known to the Jews as a whole, and information about the Jews was carried to Greece. Greek philosophers, some of whom followed Alexander's army, would be interested in the Jews. Theophrastus in a fragment called the Jews the philosophers of the Syrians. But he probably got his information at second hand and is mistaken in several details about their cult and religion. The first Greek writer who really knew anything about the Jews is Hecataeus of

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<sup>1</sup> Herod. I.105, the Scythians and the Egyptians under Psammetichus met in battle in *Παλαιστίνη Συρία* and the Scythians retreated to the city of Askalon, which possesses the oldest temple of *Ἀποδότην οὐρανίου* ; II.104-6, the Phoenicians and Syrians of Palestine learned the practice of circumcision from the Egyptians. The country is mentioned also in III.5; III.91; IV.39 and VII.89.

But Hugo Willrich, *Juden und Griechen vor der Makkabäischen Erhebung*, (Göttingen, 1895) p.43, says that it has been proved that Herodotus meant by "the Syrians of Palestine" not the Jews but the Philistines.

Abdera (end of the fourth century) who deals with them in his Egyptian history used by Diodorus. During the wars of the Dia-chochi the Greeks had more opportunity to become acquainted with the Jews and various writers refer to them.<sup>1</sup> When we reach the second century B.C. the period of the Maccabaeen Wars, we find a strong pro-Greek faction in Jerusalem who had adopted Greek customs and evidently were familiar with Greek literature, and in Egypt we have even closer connection. Here we find the Jewish Scriptures being translated into Greek, and Hellenistic Jews striving to adapt their religion to Greek civilization, and to prove an early connection between the two nations.<sup>2</sup>

So, if we accept the most probable date for the book of Job, the possibility of Greek influence remains very doubtful, and only overwhelming internal evidence would definitely prove it. Kallen (p.23) without giving any real proofs for his theory conjectures that the author of Job in the last years of the fifth century may have heard of Euripidean tragedy from an Egyptian or Syrian Jew visiting Palestine, or that he himself may have travelled and seen a play acted in Egypt or Syria. He admits that there are few Hellenisms in the language of Job and those only in suspected portions. The author may not have known Greek, but even

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<sup>1</sup>E.g. Euhemeros of Messene, Mnaseas of Patara, Manetho, Berossos, Hermippos Kallimacheios, Agatharchides of Knidos. However, we know of these only from even later writers, chiefly Josephus.

<sup>2</sup>The only mention of Greece in the Old Testament is in Zech. 9.13, which is generally considered a late addition, and in the book of Daniel (8.21; 10.20; 11.2) which dates from the Maccabaeen revolt. But the Javan of Gen. 10.2 is often referred to the Ionians. Of course it is not at all impossible that Jewish writers of even the pre-exilic period should have known that such a people as the Ionians existed. - Cf. J. Burnet, Who Was Javan? Classical Association of Scotland Proceedings, X. pp.91-107. Cf. also Wellhausen, Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, pp.182-95 and 257-8.



so he would notice the prologue, the long speeches of the agon, the chorus with its leader, the messenger, the deus ex machina, and the epilogue, and would imitate these, and he would probably miss the plot construction.

Jastrow says (p.180), "If there is any influence of Greek literary models to be sought in Job it lies in the Greek Symposium as a medium for the discussion of philosophic theories - always involving religious beliefs - which becomes through Plato such a characteristic division of Greek literature." Yet this would not be very probable unless we put Job in the latter part of the fourth century or later, and we can account for the book without it. Moreover, Jastrow reminds us that the dialogue is also found in Babylonian literature.<sup>1</sup> He finds no definite traces of Greek philosophical thought and speculation in Job. He grants that perhaps in a general way we may think that a wave of rationalism spread over the Orient in the fifth and fourth centuries and that intellectual currents arising in Greece may have flowed eastward even before Alexander's time.

Jordan (p.75-6) says that the problem treated in Job engaged men's thoughts in many lands and ages and that it is not necessary to think of borrowing, even though Aeschylus in Greece was at the same time handling similar problems.<sup>2</sup> The material, style and atmosphere were very different. He thinks that the chapter on wisdom, being later than the original book, may have been influenced by Greek ideas. M. Friedländer<sup>3</sup> is one of the chief

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. the specimen in German translation by Ebbeling, in Mitteilungen der Deutsch. Orientgesellschaft, No. 58, pp.35-8. Cf. also Sellin, Spuren Griechischer Phil. im Alten Testament, p.22.

<sup>2</sup>

E.g. in the Agamemnon choruses and the Prometheus.

<sup>3</sup>

Griechische Philosophie im Alten Testament, (Berlin, 1904) pp.90-130.

exponents of the theory of Greek influence. He finds Job, like all the wisdom literature, penetrated with the Greek spirit. If we accepted his date for the book (third century) his conjectures would have some plausibility. He maintains that the author of Job, to gain the ear of the people, took the traditional figure of Job to embody the new spirit. Such unsparing criticism of traditional beliefs is unheard of in Israel and found only once again, in Ecclesiastes. The author, represented by Job, belongs to the conservatives of the new movement, holding the middle ground between orthodoxy and atheistic radicalism, and combats both extremes. And he is approved by God at the end. Job, - the new spirit - does not believe blindly, but would prove all things by reason. But Job stops short of atheism and reaches his climax in the twenty-eighth chapter, the praise of divine wisdom and the statement that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Even God in the theophany can add nothing new to this, but gives the verdict in the epilogue, so condemning the two extremes. Job, the thinker who yet clings to God, is the victor and the future teacher of man. This might seem a possible interpretation, but some of Professor Friedländer's remarks tend to make us a little sceptical of his opinions. So he says, e.g. (p.114), "Hiob's Vorstellung von Gott und seinem Verhältnis zur Welt und zu den Menschen ist eine so hohe, dass man glauben möchte, einen Philosophen aus der Schule Platos aus ihm sprechen zu hören. Und eben weil er weiss dass Glück und Unglück, die den Menschen treffen, nicht als Lohn und Strafe von oben kommen, ist sein Schmerz so verzweiflungsvoll." Now this, as we shall see (infra pp. 233- 37) was by no means the Platonic doctrine. The idea of divine providence was one of the outstanding points in Plato's philosophy, and his reactions to the problem are quite different

from those of Job. Moreover, Friedländer, as Sellin points out, gives us no definite passages or expressions that can be referred to Greek originals, but contents himself with vague and general statements about the spirit of the book. Sellin denies all traces of Greek philosophy in Job and correctly says (p.22) that the problem of Job is too universal to betray any dependence on Greek philosophy, and is found in the Old Testament as early as Jeremiah and Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup>

Friedländer's theory is also combated by W. Swart (op. cit. pp.167 ff.) who holds that all the parallels between passages of Job and Greek literature are not significant enough to prove any influence. The whole wisdom literature is universalistic,<sup>2</sup> not national. This has sometimes been regarded as the result of Greek influence, but Swart thinks that if this were the case we should find more of the same tendency in the Alexandrian literature of the diaspora, yet this is strongly national in spirit. In the wisdom literature we see philosophy gradually separating itself from early religion, a thing which takes place in all nations; but in Israel philosophy never grew strong enough to build up a system of its own. Friedländer says that the idea of immortality in Job is of Greek origin and Swart objects that it is a different conception, the Greek idea being that of the immortality of the soul freed from the body, the Hebrew that of a resurrection of the body.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Job only touches on immortality as a vague possibility.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the whole discussion of this infra pp. 200ff.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in the omission of all things specifically Jewish, rites, etc., in the use almost exclusively of the terms Elohim or Adonai instead of Jahveh, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Renan, Hist. du Peuple d'Israel, IV. 329-30, Origines du Christianisme, II. 97-8, VII. 505-6. Cf. infra pp. 303 ff.



Another place where Friedländer finds Greek influence is in the unusual descriptions of nature in chapters 38-40. There is nothing, he says, anywhere else in Hebrew literature to parallel this, but Swart thinks that it may well be a result of the development of thought that sought God in all things. One might suggest in addition that some of the Psalms contain fine descriptions of nature or natural phenomena, such as the marvellous description of a storm in Psalm 18.1-15, the fine passage, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19), the lovely little song of growing things (Ps. 65.9-13) and especially Psalm 104, which is very similar in language and spirit to some of the descriptions in Job of God's power and providence in all nature.<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of nature for their own sake, moreover, are not a common characteristic of Greek literature and are a fairly late development.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that the Greeks had no feeling for nature, but rather that this feeling showed itself more in little touches, in metaphors or settings connected with human feelings or actions and not so much in Wordsworthian elaborations of scenic beauty. It was man, not nature, that occupied the attention of the Greek poets.<sup>3</sup>

All in all, there seems to be no real evidence for assuming that the book of Job was influenced by Greek literature or philosophy, though in the case of a work whose origin is so

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also Ps. 77.16-19; 107.23-30; 147.8-10; 16.18. Friedländer would argue that these Psalms also came under Greek influence.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also infra p. 294-5.

<sup>3</sup>There is a considerable literature on this subject. Cf. e.g. H. R. Fairclough, Love of Nature among the Greeks, New York, 1930; Francis G. Allinson, External Nature in Greek Poetry in The Greek Genius and its Influence, pp.33-46; Emile Gebhart, Histoire du Sentiment Poétique de la Nature dans l'Antiquité Grecque et Romaine, Paris, 1860.

shrouded in obscurity one would not dogmatically say that such influence was entirely impossible, but merely that we do not know - and it does not seem likely that anyone will ever know with certainty. When experts of Hebraic scholarship are so divided on a question the student of literature can only be sceptical.

Different from the question of influence or borrowing is the matter of parallels and analogies. It is true that these may sometimes indicate a relation, but quite often two writers may independently express their thoughts in very similar ways, especially when dealing with the same general human problem or describing similar scenes or emotions, and we frequently find such parallels even in works where historically all thought of borrowing is impossible.

We have in Job a number of passages that suggest more or less directly to our mind passages or expressions in Greek literature. So in the very first verse we have a list of Job's virtues, ἀληθινός, ἡμεμπτος, δίκαιος, θεοσεβής - perfect and upright, that feared God and eschewed evil - which sounds somewhat familiar to those acquainted with similar lists in Plato. Δικαιοσύνη and εὐσεβεία are frequently found in Plato's lists, combined with other virtues. Job 2.1-3 repeats verbatim 1.6-8. Such verbatim repetitions in a story are frequent in Homer. The complaint of Job's wife, given in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew, 2.9, ἡφάνισταί σοι τὸ μνημόσυνον ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, υἱοὶ καὶ θυγατέρες, ἐμῇ κοιλίᾳ ὥσινες καὶ πόνοι οὗς εἰς τὸ κενὸν ἐκοπίασα μετὰ μοχθῶν

makes us think of Clytemnestra's lament in Agamemnon 1417-18,

ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φίλτατην ἐμοὶ  
ὥσιν' ἐπεδὸν Ὀρχικίων ἀημάτων.

Job (ch.3 and 7.15-16) curses the day of his birth and longs for

death. Similar reflections are frequent in Greek literature. So Theognis says it is best never to have been born and next best to return as soon as possible to the world of the dead;<sup>1</sup> also (1013-16) that he is happy who dies before misery comes to him; and in Greek tragedy we often find a sufferer praying for death.<sup>2</sup> Job's "There the wicked cease from troubling and there the weary be at rest" finds its echo in Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus 955, θανόντων δ' οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἄπτεται, Trachiniae 1173, τοῖς γὰρ θανούσι μόχθος οὐ προσγίγνεται, Electra 1170, τοὺς γὰρ θάνοντας οὐχ ὁρῶ λυπουμενούς, Aeschylus' Suppliants 802-3, τὸ γὰρ θανεῖν ἐλευθεροῦται φιλικίαι πόνων, Euripides' Troades 606-7, ὁ θανὼν δ' ἐπιλάθεται ἁλγέων ἁδίσκρυτος.<sup>3</sup> The conception of the world of the dead in Job 3 and 14.2 ff. is the same as that found in Homer and all early Greek literature, a shadowy realm where there is no joy or pain and from which there is no return.<sup>4</sup>

A very interesting point occurs in Job 22.3, repeated in 35.6-7: "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous" says Eliphaz to Job, "or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" and Elihu likewise, "If thou sinnest what doest thou against him? ... if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? ... Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." This is the same question that is discussed at length in Plato's Euthyphro: What can man do for God? and which is also touched upon in Euripides' Heracles 1345-6, "God if he be God has need of naught."

<sup>1</sup>Theognis 425-8. Cf. also Soph. O. C. 1224 f.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Ajax 394 ff.; Heracles in Trach. 1040 f.; 1085 f.; Medea 144 f.; Philoctet. 782 f., etc.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. also Alcest. 866 f., 937; Heraclidae 593 f.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. supra p. 25; infra p. 299.



Interesting too is the poetical expression in 38.7, "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Here it has faded to a metaphor, but it is quite likely that in early times the stars and planets were considered as divinities among the Hebrews as they are spoken of by Plato in the Laws.<sup>1</sup> In fact the Deuteronomic code forbids worship of them,<sup>2</sup> and in 2 Kings 23.11 we have a reference to "the horses that the king of Judah had given to the sun."

It may also be worth while to notice the various metaphors and figures of speech found in Job and to compare them with such expressions in the Greek writers. Most frequent are figurative expressions for the frailty and transitoriness of human life and happiness. So Job says "Man's days are like a hireling's (7.1; cf. 14.6); "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle (7.6; Septuagint ἐλαφρότερος λαλῶν), "swifter than a post" (9.25); "They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." And again (8.9), "Our days ... are a shadow" and (14.2) "Man ... cometh forth like a flower and is cut down;" "As a cloud is consumed and vanisheth away so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Job compares himself to "a leaf driven to and fro" and to "dry stubble" (13.25), and says, "They pursue my soul as the wind and my welfare passeth away as a cloud." Similar are the expressions for the uncertainty of the wicked. "The candle of the wicked put out ... As stubble before the wind and as chaff" (21.17). "He shall fly away as a dream ...

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<sup>1</sup>822 C, 899 AB. Cf. also the music of the spheres in Rep. 617 B.

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 4.19; 17.3. Cf. also 2 Kings 17.16; 21.3; 23.5. Cf. infra p. 318-19.

chased away as a vision of the night" (20.8). "He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine and shall cast off his flower as the olive" (15.33). "His roots shall be dried up beneath and above shall his branch be cut off" (18.16).<sup>1</sup> The wicked are like a rush soon withered. Their trust shall be a spider's web (8.11-14).

Similar figures are frequent in Greek literature. So Homer says (Il. VI. 146):

οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν . . . .

Sophocles (Ajax 125-6):

ὄρω γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν  
εἶδωλ' ὅσοι περ θῶμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν,

and Pindar (Pyth. VIII.95 (136) ), σκιᾶς ὄνερ ἄνθρωπος,  
and Mimnermus 2.1, Ἡμεῖς δ' οἶά τε φύλλα φύει πολάνθεος ὥρη  
ἔκρος . . . .

likewise Sophocles fr. 593:

τανυφλοίου γὰρ ἰσαμέριος  
φύλλοις τις ἀγέριου βιοτὰν ἀποβάλλει,

and fr. 945, οὐδὲν ἔσμεν πλὴν σκιᾶς εὐκότες,

Euripides fr. 621:

τὸν ὄλβον οὐδὲν οὐδαμοῦ κρίνω βροτοῖς  
ὅν γ' ἐξαλείφει ῥῆον ἢ γράφην θεός,

and Aeschylus Agamemnon 1327-9:

ὡς βροτεῖα πράγματα· εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν  
σκιᾶ τις ἂν πρεψαεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχῇ  
βολαῖς ὑγρώσων σπόγγος ὥλεσεν γραβήν.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. 19.10, "Mine hope hath he removed like a tree," and 29.19, "My root was spread out by the waters and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

We have kept the figure in our expression "to be destroyed root and branch."

And we find the same expressions used frequently of the aged. So Oedipus (Eurip. Phoen. 1543-5) calls himself εἴσωλον and πτανὸν ὄνειρον.<sup>1</sup>

Somewhat related to these is the figure that conceives of death as a reaper and man as the grain. So Eliphaz says "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season" (5.26), which we find also in Sophocles Antigone 601-2, θεῶν τῶν νερτέρων ἀμὲ κοπὶς, and Aeschylus Supplikes 637, Ἄρη τὸν θερίζοντα βροτούς.<sup>2</sup> The figure of reaping in another connection we find also in the familiar expression (Job 4.8) "They that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same (Septuagint ὁδύνας θεριούσιν), which occurs also in Euripides fr. 423, there said of ill-gotten gain, ἀμᾶσθε τῶνδε δύστηνον θέρος, and in Agamemnon 1655, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς' ἐξαμῆκαι πολλὰ δύστηνον θέρος.<sup>3</sup>

Another interesting figure occurs in 29.14, "I put on righteousness... my judgment was as a robe and a diadem," which becomes a commonplace in biblical literature.<sup>4</sup> In Plato Protagoras 320 E we have the expression "clothed with smallness" (σικιρότητι ἡμπισχε). In 10.11 Job says that God "clothed me with skin and flesh, which suggests the thought of the body as the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Eurip. fr. 25, ὀνείρων δ' ἐρπομεν μιμήματα, Androm. 745, σικιὲ γὰρ ἀντίστοιχος ὢν, fr. 512, φωνῇ καὶ σικιᾷ γέρων.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Eurip. Suppl. 448-9 of the tyrant, ἀπολωτὶς νεὸς ὡς λειμῶνος ἥρινος, στάχυν, and fr. 757, ἀναγκαιῶς δ' ἔχει βίον θερίζειν ὥστε κάρπιμον στάχυν.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Gal. 6.7-8; Hos. 8.7; 10.12; Eccl. 11.6; Prov. 6.14, 19, etc.

<sup>4</sup>

Cf. e.g. Ps. 132.9, "clothed with righteousness; 132.16, "clothe ... with salvation," 1 Pet. 5.5, "be clothed with humility," etc. Cf. also 1 Cor. 15.53-4.



vesture of the soul, which we find in Plato Gorgias 523 C, ἡμῶν  
 εσμένους εἰςὶ σώματα τε καὶ and less explicitly in Phaedo 87  
 BC.<sup>1</sup>

Frequent in Greek as in Hebrew literature is also the figure found in Job 23.10, "When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."<sup>2</sup> We have it in Theognis 417-18, παρὶ τρίβομαι ὥστε  
 μολίβδω χρυσοῦς, and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Job 41.18, "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning"<sup>4</sup> makes us think of Iliad XI. 1-5 and other Homeric passages, and also of Euripides Electra 102, Ἔως ... λευκὸν ὄμμα' ἀνείρεται. The elaborated figure likening the sympathy of his friends to a stream that is dried up (6.15 ff.) may remind us of the long similes in Homer, embroidered with many details, but the technique is different, a Homeric simile usually playing on one word of the original comparison, which is not the case in Job.

Interesting too are the figures connected with animals which are enumerated by G. H. Gilbert (The Poetry of Job, Chicago, 1889) p.165 and contrasted with some of Homer's figures of the same kind. It is true that some of these Homeric figures, such as the comparison of the old men to the locusts, and the Greeks to the flies in the herdsman's stalls are rather amusing, but they are not, as Mr. Gilbert implies, inappropriate, and they are

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also Eurip. Bacch. 746, σαρκοῦς ἐνδύτα, Herc. Fur. 1269, σαρκοῦς περιβόλαι, Emped. fr. 126. The figure became a commonplace in mediaeval and modern literature. Cf. e.g. Shakespeare, "Muddy vesture of decay," Petrarch, etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ps. 12.6; 66.10; 1 Pet. 1.7; Is. 48.10; Zech. 13.9, etc.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. e.g. Theog. 447-52, 1105-6; Herod. I. 50; VII. 10; Eurip. fr. 955; Simonides 64.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. also 3.9, "Neither let it see the eyelids of the morning," (A.V. "dawning of the day.")

never grotesque, as Hebrew figures frequently are. For example in the description of behemoth the poet says (40.17), "He moveth his tail like a cedar." Some commentators have argued from this that behemoth must be a mythical monster and not the hippopotamus as is usually affirmed. But the simile is not a bit more daring or grotesque than some found elsewhere in the Bible, e.g. in the Song of Solomon, where the poet says of his beloved that her hair is as a flock of goats (4.1), her neck like the tower of David builded for an armory (4.4) and her nose as the tower of Lebanon (7.4).

Leaving these literary parallels, we may now turn our attention to the central problem of the book of Job. The question "Why do the wicked flourish" has exercised the minds of men almost from the time that they began to think rationally and it became a more pressing problem as thought became more philosophical. As soon as man attains even a glimmer of morality, he begins to feel that righteousness should be attended by happiness and wickedness followed by punishment. While a nation feels no very close connection between religion and morality the problem does not present itself to any great extent. So in early Israel it was not so much morality as the exclusive cult of Jehovah that was popularly supposed to result in blessings and rewards, and the early religious leaders could always point to some failure in that respect to account for calamities.

In early Greece the problem was somewhat different. But here too morality was not a characteristic of the gods, and their rivalries and jealousies, as portrayed in the Homeric poems, made men the pawns in a rather cruel game. And in addition, there was above the gods, the inscrutable power, Fate, against which even

Zeus was helpless.<sup>1</sup> Yet even in Homer, our earliest record of Greek thought, we find the idea, to which men seemed irresistibly drawn, that the gods do punish wickedness and reward righteousness.<sup>2</sup> And through the centuries, in spite of much seeming proof to the contrary, this belief finds utterance in the works of the poets and dramatists. On the other hand, we also meet again and again the despairing or rebellious cry that righteousness profits not, that the gods do not look upon the deeds of men, and that the wicked prosper. But these very complaints prove that the problem was alive, and the two views, like armies in battle, surged back and forth in men's minds.

Hesiod (Works and Days, 225-37) discourses on the peace and plenty that attend the just, and the ill fortune in store for the unjust (238-47) and again (265-6) voices the sentiment that he who plots evil against another brings it upon himself.<sup>3</sup> But he also complains bitterly that it is of no use to be good, for the unjust always have the advantage (269-272).<sup>4</sup> Theognis makes the same complaint yet more vigorously. He even addresses Zeus most familiarly and upbraids him for the conditions of mortal life. "Dear Zeus," he says in substance (373 ff.), "I am surprised at you. Here you are lord of all and know the minds

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. infra p. 207. Cf. Il. XVI. 433 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Shorey in Sneath, The Evolution of Ethics (New Haven, 1927) p.239-40, and also ibid. p.259: "The normal Greek and for that matter the normal man, has always felt, in spite of the protest of Christian and Platonic idealism, that punishment, retribution, revenge, if we must employ the invidious term, is indispensable to the maintenance of moral law and faith."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Aesch. Ag. 501-2; Eurip. Ion 1247 f., Herc. Fur. 727, 755-6. Cf. Prov. 26.27; 28.10; Eccl. 10.8

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also Od. II. 230-232.

of men ... yet the wicked are blessed and prosper and the righteous are poor." And again (745-50) "King of immortals, how can this be just when a man who refrains from wrongdoing does not receive his just due? What mortal will reverence the gods when he sees this, and how will men feel when they see a wicked man insolent in his wealth and a just man oppressed by poverty?"<sup>1</sup> But Theognis too (197 ff.) says that just gains abide while property acquired unjustly may seem a gain at first, but in the end becomes an evil, though the fact that the punishment is often long delayed or visited on a man's descendants hides this fact from men.

We do not find much on the subject in the lyric poets. They deal chiefly with patriotism, love, the joys of youth, the sorrows of age, or more practical or trivial matters. Solon echoes Theognis in some of his verses and we find the problem troubling him too. So in 13. 65-70:

πῶς δέ τοι κίνδυνος ὅπ' ἔργμασιν, οὐδέ τις οἶδεν  
 ἥ μέλλει στήσειν χρήματος ἄρχομένου,  
 ἀλλ' ὃ μὲν εὖ ἔρδειν πειρώμενος οὐ προνοήσας  
 εἰς μεγάλην ἄτην καὶ χελεπὴν ἔπεσεν  
 τῷ δὲ κακῶς ἔρδοντι θεὸς περὶ πάντα δίδωσι  
 συντυχίην ἀγαθὴν, ἐκκλυσιν ἀφροσύνης.

But like Theognis he too feels with the psalmist that "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Ps. 37.16). So 13. 7 he says:

χρήματα δ' ἑμείρω μὲν ἔχειν, ἁδίκως δὲ πεπρωθῆαι  
 οὐκ ἐθέλω. πάντως ὕστερον ἦλθε Δίκη, etc.

and again (15)

πολλοὶ γὰρ πλουτοῦσι κακοί, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ πένονται,  
 ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς τούτοις οὐ διαμειψόμεθα,  
 τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸν πλοῦτον, ἔπει το μὲν ἐμπεδον αἰεὶ  
 χρήματα δ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also Il. XIII. 631.



The tragedians deal throughout with the problem in one or another of its aspects. In Aeschylus especially we find constantly repeated the statement that the gods reward virtue and punish wrong; e.g. Supplikes 403-4:

Ζεὺς ἑτερορρέπης νέμων εἰκότως  
ἴδικα μὲν κακοῖς ὅσα δ' ἐννόμοις

and 733-4,

χρόνῳ τοι κυρίῳ τ' ἐν ἡμέρῃ  
Θεοὺς ἀτίζων τις βροτῶν δώσῃ δίκην

Agamemnon 58-9,

ὕστερόποινον πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἑρινύν.

The idea is elaborated with grim satisfaction by the Eumenides (550-565). The god laughs<sup>1</sup> at the passionate, covetous, unjust man, and he makes shipwreck of his fortune and is destroyed utterly.

A similar statement occurs in the Agamemnon (461 ff.)

κελαιναι δ' Ἑρίνυες χρόνῳ  
τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας, παλιντυχεῖ τριβᾶ βίον  
τιθεῖσ' ἀμαυρόν, etc.

Again and again we find the thought δρᾶσαντι παθεῖν, we reap what we sow, the doer must suffer.<sup>2</sup> And on the other hand we find Apollo saying (Eumen. 725-6):

οὐκ οὖν δίκαιον τὸν σέβοντ' εὐεργετεῖν  
ἄλλως τε πάντως χῶτε δεόμενος τύχοι;

and also the statement that all-seeing justice follows man and renders him due recompense.<sup>3</sup> Sophocles (Oed. Col. 1536-7) remarks that the gods see well, though it may be late, when a man turns from godliness. The idea of the late punishment of the wicked is

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Psalm 2.4; 37.13.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ag. 532-3, 1527-8, 1563-4, 1658; Choeph. 310-15; fr. 456. Cf. also Choeph. 888; Soph. fr. 229, 962; Eurip. Ion 1247-9.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Eurip. fr. 257, 508.

also frequent in Euripides,<sup>1</sup> and in the Alcestis we find its converse (603-4):

πρὸς δ' ἐμῇ ψυχῇ θάρσος ἦτορ  
θεοσεβῇ φῶτα κέδνα πράξευν.

The belief in divine punishment is sometimes rather confused with the idea of being the divine instrument and oneself inflicting the deserved penalty, as in Aeschylus' Agamemnon and Choephoroi and Sophocles' Electra. In the latter play Clytemnestra says of the slain Agamemnon (528), "Justice slew him, not I alone," and Electra (244 f.) passionately exclaims,

For if these dead must rot  
And be as souls forgot,  
And those assassins shall not pay  
The price of blood upon some judgment day,  
Away with right and law,  
With reverence and awe,  
No more to any god bend knee or pray.

(Shorey trans.)

And when her gentler sister ventures the opinion that strict justice is often hurtful she replies with decision, "I would not live by such laws." (1042-3).

The exercise of proper punishment on evil doers is frequently made a condition of belief in divine providence, as the passage just quoted implies. So Aegisthus on seeing Agamemnon slain (Aesch. Ag. 1578-9) says, "Now I admit the gods above look down upon the wrongs of men and avenge them;" and the chorus in Euripides' Suppliants, hearing of Theseus' victory over the Thebans, exclaims, "Now seeing this un hoped-for day I believe in the gods." Similarly Euripides fr. 581, 893, Heracleidae 869 f., and also Euripides Electra 583-4, "We need never believe in the gods any more if injustice prevails over justice,"<sup>2</sup> and the idea is

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ion 1614-15, 1619-22, El. 954-6, fr. 832, 224, 305, 797.

<sup>2</sup>

Cf. also Theognis, supra p. 202, and Eurip. Hec. 798 ff., fr. 1030.

more or less parodied in Odysseus' prayer to Zeus in Euripides' Cyclops (350):

εἰ γὰρ αὐτὰ μὴ θέλεις  
ἄλλως νομίζει Ζεὺς, τὸ μηδὲν ὦν, θεός.

There are numerous other references to the belief in divine punishment,<sup>1</sup> and also to divine providence, as for example, Aeschylus Supplikes 816, 822-4, Septem 21-3, 625, 1020-3, Ag. 370 ff., 532 f., 1485 ff., Sophocles Ajax 383, 455, Electra 174 f., 696-7, Oedipus Coloneus 252 f., Philoctetes 192 ff., (Soph.) fr. 1129, Euripides Bacchae 392-4, Helena 663, fr. 149, 981, 395, 1014, etc. And countless times one meets the expression "God sent" or "Zeus did it" or similar phrases.<sup>2</sup> Such expressions are usually little more than pious commonplaces and bromides, probably meaning little more than a modern man's "Thank heaven!"; but the idea was there, and it led to the idea of resignation: "We must bear what the gods send. Do not complain."<sup>3</sup> This idea of resignation does not come out so strongly in the Old Testament,<sup>4</sup> perhaps because to the early Hebrews God's ways did not seem so inscrutable. They were too certain that misfortunes were caused by a failure of piety. Yet they too attributed every event to God.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. e.g. Aesch. Ag. 750 ff., 813 f., Eurip. Andr. 439, 463, 492, Bacch. 882 ff., Heraclid. 932-5, El. 1169, Phoen. 1726-7, Herc. Fur. 754-8, etc.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. e.g. Ag. 635, 637, 649, 961, Trach. 1278, Alcest. 297-8, Androm. 1203, Soph. fr. 961, 964, etc.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Alcest. 1071, Phoen. 379 f., 1763, Herc. Fur. 309-11, Soph. fr. 585, 196, 680, Eurip. fr. 37, 207, 757, and *passim*.

<sup>4</sup>We find it a few times. Cf. e.g. Eli's words in 1 Sam. 3.18, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," and 2 Sam. 15.26.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. 2 Chron. 10.15, "For the cause was of God," Jud. 9.23, "God sent" the enmity between Abimelech and Shechem. Cf. 2 Sam. 17.14, 2 Chron. 11.4; 25.20; 13.20; 1 Kings 12.15; 12.24; 1 Sam. 2.25.

Aeschylus permits no doubt of the divine justice. To him it is as certain as any law of nature. Each of his plays traces the workings of the Power that established the immutable law that insolence brings ruin, that the doer must suffer, and that of suffering comes wisdom. Though His ways be inscrutable, His purpose is always accomplished.<sup>1</sup> In Sophocles we have an occasional hint of the other side of the question, so e.g. Antigone says (922-4):

τί χρή με τὴν δύστηνον ἐς θεοὺς εἶ  
βλέπειν, τίν' αὖδ' ἀν' ἀνυμμάχων, ἐπεὶ γε δὴ  
τὴν δυσσεβείαν εὐσεβοῦς ἐκτεσάμην.

But Sophocles, as Aristophanes says of him, was ever εὐκόλος and he did not let the problem embitter him or destroy his serene faith in the power that guides the courses of the stars and orders mortal destiny. The alternation of joy and sorrow was to him as inevitable in human life as the change of the seasons in nature.<sup>2</sup> With Euripides the case is different. His characters rebel at evils sent by the gods and frequently deny the moral government of the universe.<sup>3</sup> At best they say that God's ways are dark and inscrutable.<sup>4</sup>

So we see the problem constantly recurring, and various solutions are offered for it by different writers.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ag. 1563-4, 176-83, 367-72, Suppl. 86-103. Cf. also Persae 739 ff., etc.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also infra p. 213.

<sup>3</sup>Herc. Fur. passim; Hippol. passim; Phoenissae in fine, Orestes, etc. Cf. also infra p. 210 f.

<sup>4</sup>Iph. Taur. 475 f.

<sup>5</sup>Renan, Hist. du Peuple d'Israel I. pref. p.ii. completely misses the mark when he says, "La Grèce ... méprise les humbles, et n'éprouva pas le besoin d'un Dieu juste. Ses philosophes en rêvant l'immortalité de l'âme, furent tolérants pour les iniquités de ce monde."



earliest and the one most common in Homer is the reference of all calamities to Fate. The gods could help a man or harm him but his ultimate destiny was in the hands of this impersonal, amoral power, too remote to be moved by anything that man could do. There was no questioning it or reasoning with it. It was as final as an impenetrable, unscalable cliff at the end of a road. Even the gods were quite powerless before it, and men had of necessity to submit to it. There was no appeal. We find it also in later literature, as *Μοῖρα*, *Ἀνάγκη*, *Τύχη*, etc. sometimes curiously confused with the gods, sometimes opposed to them. There is no escape from Fate by any means. This statement with many variations recurs numerous times.<sup>1</sup> An Aeschylean fragment carries this fatalism almost ad absurdum (fr. 362) and asserts that no man dies, however many wounds he may receive, unless his time is come, and even though seated at home by his own hearth he cannot escape his doom.<sup>2</sup>

Clytemnestra in the *Choephoroi* (910) blames Fate for her crimes. In the *Eumenides* the personified Fates are πάντα τιμωῖνται θεῶν. In Euripides' *Alcestis* (973 ff.) the chorus sings that Ἀνάγκη, Fate, is the only goddess whose image and altar one cannot approach and who pays no heed to sacrifices. Even the gods are subject to this power. So Aeschylus fr. 476, says,

πάντων τύκννος ἢ τύχη ὅτι τῶν θεῶν  
τα δ' ἄλλ' ὀνόματα ταῦτα προσκεῖται μάτην  
μόνη διοικεῖ γοῦν ἅπανθ' ἧ βούλεται,

and Sophocles, fr. 256, πρὸς τὴν ἀνάγκην οὐδ' Ἄρης ἀνθίστα-

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Aesch. *Choeph.* 103-4,  
τὸ μορσιμον γὰρ τὸν τελευθερον μένει,  
καὶ τὸν πρὸς ἄλλης δεσποτοῦμενον χερὸς.

Cf. also *Ag.* 67-70, *Cho.* 464, *Sept.* 280-2, *Prom.* 103-5, *Aj.* 485-6, *Antig.* 951-3, 1337-8. Cf. Pindar *Pyth.* XII. 30; Herod. I. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Soph. fr. 686.

ταί.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Prometheus runs the idea that even Zeus is powerless before Fate, e.g. 517-18:

- τούτων ἄρα Ζεὺς ἐστὶν ἁθηνέστερος;
- οὐκ οὖν ἂν ἐκφύγοι γε τὴν πεπρωμένην.

On the other hand fate and god are frequently associated so that one feels that the two conceptions were not always plainly differentiated in the mind of the poet. Theognis 817-18 says,

ὅτι μοῖρα παθεῖν οὐκ ἔσθ' ὑπ' αὐλῆς καὶ  
ὅτι δὲ μοῖρα παθεῖν οὔτι δέδοικε παθεῖν<sup>2</sup>

But in 165-6 he says almost the same of δαίμων and 171-2 of the gods.<sup>3</sup> We find the same confusion or linking of Fate with God in Aeschylus, e.g. Supplikes 1048-9,

ὅτι τοι μόρσιμόν ἐστιν, τὸ γένοιτ' ἄν  
Διὸς οὐ παρρατός ἐστιν  
μεγάλα φρὴν ἀπέραντος,

and even in Euripides, Andromache 1268-9,

τὸ γὰρ πεπρωμένον  
δεῖ σ' ἐκκομίσσειν. Ζηνὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ τάδε.<sup>4</sup>

When Fate is thus associated or identified with God, and God becomes endowed with a moral nature, the solution - if it can be called that - offered by the idea of fate no longer holds, unless

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Simonides fr. 5.16,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also 1187-90.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also 1028-36, 133-42, 617-18, 355-80 and Solon 13. 55-6, 63-4.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also Sept. 280-2, Persae 93-102, and such expressions as θεοθεν Μοῖρα, Persae 102, Ag. 661 ff., 913, σὺν θεοῖς εἰμαρμένα, Eum. 392, μοιροκράντων ἐκ θεῶν, Ag. 1026, μοῖρα ἐκ θεῶν, Choeph. 306, Μοῖραι Διόθεν, Philoct. 1326, θεῖα τύχη, Soph. fr. 196, and even in Homer Μοῖρα θεῶν, Od. XI. 292, Μοῖρα θεῶν, Od. III. 269.

in extremely simple minds, and so we face the unfortunate dilemma first voiced clearly by Theognis: If God is omnipotent and omniscient, why are the wicked prosperous and the righteous afflicted?<sup>1</sup>

There is in Homer, Odyssey I. 32-4, the suggestion of another solution, which there sounds almost amusingly naïve, but is much more significant than it appears. "Alack!" says Zeus in disgust, "How mortals blame the gods, and say that their ills come from us, but they suffer misfortunes more than their share because of their follies." Now the hypothesis of an ethical divinity who is also omnipotent makes it almost absolutely necessary that men should in some way be to blame for their misfortunes. In the poets of the fifth century we have the conception of Zeus as a righteous judge first strongly brought out, and also his supreme power constantly emphasized.<sup>2</sup> It seemed evident from practical experience that the wicked were not always punished during their lifetime and the good rewarded. The solidarity of the state and the family in those times suggested another solution. The sins of the fathers were visited on the children. So Euripides says repeatedly, e.g. Herc. Fur. 126,

ὅταν δὲ κρηπὶς μὴ καταβληθῇ γένους  
ὀρθῶς, ἀνάγκη δυστυχεῖν τοὺς ἐκγόνους,

fr. 970,

τὰ τῶν τεκόντων σφάλματ' εἰς τοὺς ἐκγόνους  
οἱ θεοὶ τρέπουσιν,

Hippolytus 1379 ff.

μικροφόνων τε συγγόνων  
παλαιοῦν προγεννητόρων  
ἐξορίζεται κακὸν οὐδὲ μέλλει  
ἔμολε τ' ἐπ' ἐμὲ

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<sup>1</sup>It is stated most explicitly in Sophocles fr. 107. Cf. also Eurip. fr. 293 and 685.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. supra p. 63.

τί ποτε τὸν οὐδὲν ὄντ' ἐπαίτιον κακῶν.<sup>1</sup>

In the Agamemnon trilogy of Aeschylus and his Seven Against Thebes the ancestral curse is responsible for all the woe.<sup>2</sup>

Somewhat similar is the idea also found a number of times that one man's sins bring calamity to a whole city,<sup>3</sup> of which we find a hint even in Hesiod (W. and D. 240),

πολλὰκι καὶ ξύμπασα πόλιν κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπηύρα,

and the closely related idea that a good man who associates with the evil shares their punishment, which is explicitly set forth in Aeschylus Septem 597-614, and referred to in Euripides Electra 1349 f. Here Castor in his capacity of deus ex machina says that the Dioscuri aid only the righteous, not the impious, consequently let no one set forth on a voyage with perjurers.<sup>4</sup> Yet this solution was not a satisfactory one to the thoughtful man. Aeschylus, the stern old Puritan, does not question its justice, but even Theognis rebels at it (731 ff.) "Father Zeus," he says in effect, "I would it might please the gods that a sinner should be punished for his evil deeds and not that the follies of the father bring evil upon the children," etc. And Euripides, as we see in the Hippolytus passage, feels the difficulty also. "Why should it come upon me," cries Hippolytus, "who am in no way to blame?" - Why, indeed? There seemed to be no answer to that question.

Yet the Hippolytus gives us one of the most vivid portrayals of the problem of suffering and attempts, with what suc-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. also Hippol. 831-3, Theognis 205-8, and Solon 13:  
ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν αὐτίκ' ἔτεισεν, ὁ δ' ὕστερον· οἱ δὲ φύγῳ σὺν  
αὐτοῖς μηδὲ θεῶν μοῖρ' ἐπιούσῃ κίχῃ,  
ἤλυθε πάντως αὐτίς· ἀνάτιοι ἐργὰ τίνουσιν  
ἢ παῖδες τούτων ἢ γένος ἐξοπίσω.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Septem 689 ff., 720 ff., 977-9 and passim.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. e.g. Soph. O. T. init.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. also Eurip. fr. 848.



cess we shall see, to solve it after a fashion. Hippolytus, the pure and noble youth, is falsely accused by his father Theseus of unchastity, and cursed and exiled from the land. As a result of the curse Poseidon sends a sea monster that frightens Hippolytus' horses and they overturn the chariot and he is fatally injured. How can this be just? The explanation given in the play is that Hippolytus worshipped Artemis, the maiden goddess, exclusively, and Aphrodite he greeted afar off. She in anger at his neglect causes Phaedra, the stepmother of Hippolytus, to fall madly in love with him. Her passion is secretly revealed to Hippolytus by Phaedra's nurse and he is horrified and scorns it. Phaedra in her shame kills herself, but leaves a letter for her husband accusing Hippolytus of the wrong of which she herself was guilty. Did Hippolytus' neglect of one goddess deserve so great a punishment? Artemis, who appears at the end endeavors to explain the situation. The blame is divided between Theseus and Aphrodite. Theseus was over-hasty and unreasonable, and Poseidon, having promised him the fulfillment of three curses, had no other way but to keep his promise, however foolish and wrong the curse was. But the anger and spite of Aphrodite was the real cause. Artemis carefully explains that she is very sorry, but it is the custom of the gods not to oppose the plans of their fellow-gods, and Zeus upholds that custom.

It seems evident that we have here not progressed one step beyond Homer. The gods are indeed portrayed as even more faulty and human. Aphrodite is utterly despicable, Poseidon absurdly weak and mechanical, and Artemis quite disappointing in spite of her sympathy and her lame excuses. "I grieve," she says, "for the gods are sorry when the righteous die. The wicked we destroy, house, children and all." - It makes a dreary world, this doc-

trine. The gods are powerful for evil, but strangely powerless for good. Artemis' chief comfort to Hippolytus is one that seems utterly unworthy of him and of her. She promises to be revenged on Aphrodite by slaying her favorite. Hippolytus is to be honored by future generations.

In the Heracles similarly it is Hera's hatred that sends madness upon Heracles and causes him to slay his children,<sup>1</sup> though here there is also a reference to the ancestral curse and punishment for the sins of the fathers (1261-2). Theseus, who proves a noble friend in misfortune, also suggests that it is fate, against which neither gods nor men can strive (1311 ff.)

οὐδεὶς δὲ Θνητῶν τᾷς τύχαις ἀκήρατος  
οὐ θεῶν, λοιδῶν εἴπερ οὐ ψευδεὶς λόγος.

καί τοι τί ρήσεις, εἰ σὺ μὲν θνητὸς γεγώς  
φέρεις ὑπέρφει τὰς τύχας, θεοὶ δὲ μή.

Heracles himself utters a thought that points toward later developments of the problem. "I do not believe the tales of the bards about the gods," he says in effect, "their adulteries and quarrels, nor that one god is master over another. God, if indeed he be God, has need of naught." Heracles perhaps is here for the moment only the mouthpiece of Euripides, or being like Theseus, nobler than the gods portrayed in the play, he from his own nobility wins to a higher conception of divinity. But that only makes the problem all the more insoluble, unless we accept the unsatisfactory explanation of an ancestral curse.

Sophocles in this matter as in most other things occupies the mean between Aeschylus and Euripides. In his dramas as in those of Aeschylus folly and wrong bring destruction on the sinner or his descendants, yet the sternness of the judgment is softened

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. especially 822-860, 1191, 1263 ff., 1311-12.

in various ways. Ajax because of his uncontrolled anger and vindictiveness is smitten by Athena with madness to turn him from his murderous purpose, and in his shame and disappointment slays himself. But somehow Sophocles makes us feel that it is best so. Ajax' ruin was not all undeserved, and though we pity him we feel that his violent and passionate nature could not fare otherwise. His character was his fate, his daemon, and we accept the warning admonition to moderation in all things, and feel the healing power of the meditations that Sophocles puts in the mouth of Ajax, 666 ff. In the Electra the doom of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus is wholly merited and Sophocles' marvellous portrayal of Electra's long suffering and its psychological effect on her fundamentally noble and affectionate nature makes us feel relief when the deed has been done, though we realize its dreadfulness.

The Trachiniae is less satisfactory. Heracles we feel deserved his doom, though that may be our modern prejudice and dislike of the double standard. But Deianeira, though perhaps foolish and simple-minded in believing the words of an enemy slain by her husband's hand, was utterly guileless and good, and the doom that came upon her quite undeserved. The play is perhaps less truly Sophoclean in tone than any of the others, though we have in it the beautiful statement of the alternation of pleasure and pain in mortal life, circling as the stars about the pole (126-30). The play leaves us with a sense of mystery. There may be in heaven a solution we cannot see, for the hand of Zeus is in all this.

The three Oedipus plays (Oedipus Tyrannus, Antigone, Oedipus Coloneus) deal with the problem in somewhat more Aeschylean fashion. The doom that descends on the seemingly innocent is the result of an ancestral curse and the decree of fate pronounced by the oracle. In the first of the three plays the problem is only

implicit. Oedipus is too overcome with the horror of his position to think much of its justice or injustice. He does call himself hateful to the gods (1519), but the play is chiefly a portrayal of the vicissitudes of fortune, the uncertainty of mortal things, and the impossibility of escape from what is fated. It raises indeed in the mind of the thoughtful reader the question, "Why should this be? Why should a man be doomed before his birth?"<sup>1</sup> but there is no attempt at an answer.

Antigone in a sense brings her doom upon herself. She walks with open eyes into peril, and going against the wishes of those in power, for the sake of her affections and ideals, she has perhaps no right to expect that any law should be suspended on her behalf. She is like Ajax the victim of her own wilful temper, in her case perhaps inherited from her father. She loved too much, as Ajax hated too much. We sympathize with her and feel that according to our ideas she should not have suffered as she did. Yet she loved the dead more than the living and she had her desire. So the tragedy is softened and transfigured. And Creon, whose injustice we deplore, receives his punishment.

In the Oedipus Coloneus we find Oedipus after years of wandering and endurance softened and resigned.<sup>2</sup> He himself feels that he has been perfected by suffering (104-5) and that his final release awaits him. He is convinced that he is not a guilty man, that it is not for any sin of his own that these miseries have come upon him<sup>3</sup> and he is not embittered by that thought but rather exalted and strengthened. Man is guided by the gods and cannot escape their watchfulness (252-4, 277-81), and Oedipus feels that

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Eurip. Phoen. 1595 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. esp. lines 7-8. Cf. Shorey in Martin Classical Lectures, Cambridge, 1931, p.77.

<sup>3</sup>266 ff., 964 ff.



he can trust them though their ways be dark. Perhaps he feels that the consciousness of his own innocence is sufficient recompense for his sufferings. At any rate there is a hint of it in his words to the chorus (309): "What good man is not dear unto himself?" As Jebb-Shuckburgh, introd. xix-xx puts it:

Consciousness of the stain is now subordinate to another feeling... He has gained a firm grasp, not to be lost, on the fact of his moral innocence. He remembers the word of Apollo long ago, which coupled the prediction of his woes with a promise of final rest and reward; and he believes that his moral innocence is recognized by the Power which punished him... He has come to look upon himself as neither pure nor yet guilty, but as a person set apart by the gods to illustrate their will, - as sacred ... (1133 and 287)... When eternal laws are broken by men, the gods punish the breach, whether wilful or involuntary; but their ultimate judgment depends on the intent. That thought is dominant in the Oedipus Coloneus. The contrast between physical blindness and inward vision is an under-note, in harmony with the higher distinction between the form of conduct and its spirit..."

But the writer continues, wrongly, it seems:

It would be a mistake to aim at bringing the play more into harmony with modern sentiment by suffusing it in a mild and almost Christian radiance, as though Oedipus had been softened, chastened, morally purified by suffering. Suffering has, indeed, taught him endurance (*στεργειν*) and some degree of caution, he is also exalted in mind by a new sense of power. But he has not been softened. Anger 'which was ever his bane' blazes up in him as fiercely as ever.

Oedipus has been softened, but he has not grown sentimental or lost his manhood and his sense of justice. Even saints, prophets and apostles have let their anger blaze against the wicked and hypocritical and have felt themselves the instruments of the wrath of God, and cried, "Woe unto that man..." And Oedipus was no saint, but a man who still retained his human emotions though they had been tempered by wisdom and sorrow. - There is in the play the suggestion of another partial answer to the problem. Oedipus as one especially consecrated to the gods by his sufferings is to become after his death a blessing and benefit to those who receive him. In a sense his sufferings make him an instrument for good in the hands of the gods. The play is a kind of mystery. We

feel that in the end all is well, though we cannot see or understand all that we surmise.

Philoctetes, in a situation somewhat similar to that of Job, ill and abandoned by his companions, wrestles with the problem and gives voice to bitter complaints against heaven (e.g. 446-52), and the chorus wonder at his undeserved misfortune (681-90). But the play ends on quite another note. Neoptolemus (1316 ff.) explains the situation to Philoctetes. "It is needful," he says, "that men endure the fortune sent by the gods." Philoctetes, he says, is making himself wretched by rejecting friendly advice. And he continues, "This disease has come upon you by divine chance, because you approached the serpent that guards the enclosure of Chrysa, and you will never obtain healing until of your own free will you go to the plain of Troy where the sons of Asclepius will cure it, and you shall sack the citadel with these shafts, together with me. The soothsayer Helenus prophesies this and also that during the coming summer Troy shall be taken. So come with me willingly, for the reward will be fair if you are chosen as preeminent of all the Greeks and come into healing hands and then win the highest glory for taking Troy." When Philoctetes still delays, Heracles appears and enforces the lesson, that good grows out of evil and suffering results in honor to the sufferer and benefit to others. "I," he says, "endured great labors and won immortal glory, as you see, and you too had to suffer this, that through your pains your life might be made glorious." Here we have perhaps the most satisfactory solution yet offered in Greek literature for our problem. The over-curious might ask, "Could not an all-powerful God accomplish the good without permitting the suffering?" which would be as pertinent as the little girl's query, "Why doesn't God kill the devil?" - the discussion of which we must postpone until we come to Plato and Job.

Turning now to the Hebrew scriptures we find there too the idea of divine punishment and reward from the very earliest times. In Genesis (3.4) Adam and Eve are punished by Jehovah for their disobedience, Cain for his crime; the flood (Gen. 6-8) comes as a result of men's wickedness. Sodom and Gomorrha are destroyed for the same reason (Gen. 19). Abraham is blessed and rewarded for his faith in Jehovah and his obedience (15.6; 22.16-17, etc.) All these are old tales probably dating back to the nomadic period of Israel though put in their present form very much later. However we see that it was not so much what we would call morality as the exclusive cult of Jehovah that was usually rewarded. Abraham is promised land and posterity if he will keep the covenant of the circumcision (Gen. 17). Jacob, who is as crafty and unscrupulous as Odysseus, is made the recipient of Jehovah's special grace, chiefly because of the piety of Abraham and Isaac, and he makes a very practical bargain with the Lord (28.20-1): "If God will be with me ... and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on ... then shall the Lord be my God." And Jehovah and Jacob both live up to their bargain.

The story of Joseph is on a somewhat loftier moral plane. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brethren through jealousy and for no fault of his own. Like Hippolytus, Joseph remains pure and chaste in spite of temptation and is calumniated by an evil woman. But Joseph's consequent punishment only proves the means to great elevation and wealth and honor. He has the satisfaction of seeing his brethren in misfortune and hearing them say that they feel it is their punishment for their wrongs toward him, and later he magnanimously forgives them and is reunited with his father. It all ends happily in approved style, and Joseph says that it was God who did it all to save their lives (Gen. 45.5-8).

But morality has not so much to do with the history of Israel as portrayed in Exodus, Joshua and the other historical books. It is a succession of falling away from the cult of Jehovah and consequently suffering reverses and calamities and again returning to the Lord under some great leader and as a result prospering once more. The traditional view is forcibly stated in the decalogue (Ex. 20.5-6): "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

Again and again we have Jehovah promising material rewards to his people on condition that they serve him, and threatening dire punishment if they do not.<sup>1</sup> This of course does not mean that the decalogue was not the highest moral code ever given in antiquity and that the Israelites did not feel that there was a connection between moral behavior and religion, but merely that in the early times this connection was a rather shadowy and variable thing, and the chief emphasis seemed to be on sacrificing to Jehovah that he in turn might help them against their enemies and bestow upon them material prosperity.<sup>2</sup>

There are also many tales of strange and violent punishments sent by Jehovah on individuals or groups. In Numbers 11.33 we read that God smote the Israelites with a plague because they had murmured against him. In 12.10 Miriam is stricken with leprosy for rebelling against Moses. All the adults except Joshua and Caleb are deprived of the satisfaction of seeing the promised land because of their discontent and unbelief (14.21 ff.) Korah

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. esp. Lev. 26 entire; Deut. 4.40; 6.18; 7; 8; 11; 27; 28; 30. Cf. also 1 Sam. 12; 1 Kings 2.3-4 and 9.4-9.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. supra p. 21.



and his band are swallowed by the earth, and fire consumes two hundred and fifty men for their rebellion against Moses (Num. 16. 33-5). At another time fiery serpents are sent among the people, and there are other similar incidents. Sometimes such punishments seem rather petty and unjust. So in 2 Sam. 6.7 the man who put his hand on the ark of God to steady it was stricken dead. The man's intentions were laudable and it seems unworthy of divinity to punish so severely a ritual sin. In 2 Sam. 24 (cf. 1 Chron. 21) David has a census of the people taken, surely a harmless if not necessary proceeding, and Jehovah in anger sends a pestilence that kills 70,000 men. In 1 Kings 20 a man of God through a perfectly natural mistake does not literally obey a command of Jehovah and is slain by a lion. In 2 Kings 2.23-4 forty-two children are killed by bears because they mocked the prophet Elisha. - The children should have been spanked but not devoured.

The books of Kings and Chronicles constantly reiterate the statement "he was destroyed for his sins" or "for the sins of his fathers." Jeroboam's family is exterminated because of his sins (1 Kings 15.29-30. Cf. also 16.12-13; 21.22 ff.) Saul "died for his transgression" (1 Chron. 10.13). The cities revolted against Jehoram "because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers" (2 Chron. 21.10. Cf. 22.24; 28.5-6.) Israel is delivered to the Syrians for their sin (2 Kings 13.3 ff.) is carried to Assyria for sinning against the Lord (2 Kings 17. Cf. 21.16 ff.; 23.27; 24; 25). The King of Egypt comes up against Jerusalem "because they had transgressed against the Lord" (2 Chron. 12.2), etc.

The sin in these cases seems to be chiefly a failure to sacrifice exclusively to Jehovah, a tendency to follow other gods

and introduce their rites into the land. Conversely we find the statement that the people were delivered when the king prayed to Jehovah (2 Kings 13.4-5), that the Lord put off the evil day when Ahab humbled himself before him (1 Kings 21.29),<sup>1</sup> that Jotham "became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." The death of the pious Josiah (2 Kings 22.26-30) evidently troubled the writer and he attributes it to the wickedness of Josiah's grandfather Manasseh, for which the Lord was still punishing Israel.

As we have already seen in the passage quoted from the Decalogue, the belief in punishment for the sins of one's fathers was strong in Israel in the early days,<sup>2</sup> and also the opinion that the nation was punished for the wickedness or idolatry of its rulers. It is interesting to note that in Deuteronomy 24.16 a loftier moral practice is enjoined upon the people than was attributed to Jehovah: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin."<sup>3</sup> The Deuteronomic code being much later than the decalogue portrays a higher ethical standard.<sup>4</sup>

And indeed when we come to the prophets of the seventh and sixth centuries we find them combatting this view in a strain more lofty than that of Theognis who wrote at about the same time. Jeremiah (31.29-30) says "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity, every

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Joel 2.12-14.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Ex. 34.7; Deut. 5.9-10.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. 2 Kings 14.6; 2 Chron. 25.4.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. supra p. 38.

man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Ezekiel devotes a powerful chapter to a treatment of the subject (ch. 18). "The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, "What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge?' ..... Behold all souls are mine.... The soul that sinneth it shall die."<sup>1</sup> He is very explicit, but it remained to be seen whether the doctrine would stand the test of experience.

The solidarity of the nation made it seem natural to the early Hebrews that the individual should suffer with the group and be in a sense responsible for their sins.<sup>2</sup> This is one of the reasons for the zeal of the prophets. Sinners must be converted lest the nation suffer. The classical example of this is of course the story of Jonah. The storm was sent against him, and his shipmates had to suffer with him until they cast him out, - which is moreover the same motif that we have in the first part of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus. Another interesting incident connected with this idea is found in the story of Abraham and Lot. When the Lord visits Abraham on his way to destroy Sodom and tells him his plans, Abraham remonstrates with him and says, "Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

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<sup>1</sup>We still find the old theory occasionally in the earlier prophets, so e.g. Is. 14.20-21; Jer. 32.18.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Renan, *Hist. du Peuple d'Israel*, I. 16; II. 475. Cf. also Ezek. 3.17-21, slightly aliter; 37.7 ff.

The Lord promises to spare all the place if he finds fifty righteous. Abraham then proceeds to lower the figures gradually, and the Lord finally promises to spare the place if he finds ten righteous. He doesn't find them, only Lot and his wife and two daughters, and then the angels bid hasten from Sodom, "lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

It is significant that we sometimes find people being punished for an unintentional wrong. So in Genesis 12.14 Pharaoh is punished for wanting to marry Sarah, Abraham's wife, when Abraham had lied to him, saying she was not his wife but his sister. In 20.2 ff. a similar story is told of Abimelech and Abraham and in 26.7 of Abimelech and Isaac. In Numbers 22.20 ff. God tells Balaam to go with the princes of Moab and then becomes angry when he does, and later Balaam himself says, "I have sinned, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way." The idea of unconscious sin also at times troubles the psalmists.<sup>1</sup>

The prophets of Israel like Aeschylus in Greece constantly affirm that the Lord punishes iniquity and that he watches over his people and none can escape from his power. And here we also find a truly ethical standard of righteousness, not sacrifices and observance of feasts and ceremonies, but clean lives and pure hearts.<sup>2</sup> So Isaiah (1.10-31) says "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? ... Wash you, make you clean ... cease to do evil. Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow ... if ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, but if ye refuse and rebel ye shall be devoured with the sword." Here we have the keynote and leitmotif of Hebrew prophecy and it is

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ps. 19.12.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Is. 58; Jer. 7.21-3; Hos. 6.6; Mic. 6.6-8 and supra p. 53.



repeated with variations ad infinitum: "Say ye unto the righteous that it shall be well with him... Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him." (Is. 3.10-11).<sup>1</sup> The prophets plead with the people to return to the Lord that he may deliver them. Their misfortunes are the result of their iniquities.<sup>2</sup> If they repent they shall be blessed.<sup>3</sup> "Wherefore doth a living man complain," says the prophet (Lam. 3.39-40), "a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord." He bewails their calamities, and the wrath of the Lord, but still acknowledges its justice.

But occasionally we find a note of remonstrance, a hint of the problem, as in Hab. 1.13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" Or in Malachi 3.14-15, "Ye have said it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered..." Evidently the problem was alive among the people, for in Zephaniah 1.12 we read: "... I will ... punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Is. 13.11; 17.10-11; 47.8-11; 48.18-19; 57.20-21; 59.1-15; 65.2-7; Jer. 4.14; 5 entire; 7 entire, esp. 2-7; 9.13-16; 15.6-7; 16.10-13; 21.14; 22.7-9; 32.19 and passim; Ezek. 5.5-9 ff.; 11.5-12; 14.6-10 and passim; Hos. 4.1-3 ff.; 8.1 ff.; 10.12-15; 14.9, etc.; Amos 2.4 ff.; 5.11-15; 9.8-10, etc.; Micah 1.3-5 ff.; 2.1-5; 6.10-15; Zech. 8.14-17; Mal. 2.17; 3.10-12; 4.1-3, and many other passages.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. e.g. Is. 59.1 ff. and supra p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. e.g. Jer. 17.7-10.

evil."<sup>1</sup> Yet on the whole the prophets were as unshaken in their faith in the divine justice as was Aeschylus.

It is not in the prophets but in the Psalms that we find the same swaying back and forth of belief that we have in the Greek poets. The prophets were men with a mission, preachers with a fiery zeal for righteousness. It is not in their sermons, but in the lyrics of the people that we should expect to find the questionings and triumphs of the human soul. A great many of these Psalms, according to the opinion of modern scholars, belong to the period of the exile and after,<sup>2</sup> when the problem had become more acute with the increase of national misfortune, the closer connection of religion and ethics, and the growth of individualism. The first Psalm confidently asserts the blessings attendant upon righteousness, and the early destruction of the wicked, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish."<sup>3</sup> But we also have the question "Why -" (44. 23-4) and the frequent prayer for the seemingly delayed destruction of the wicked;<sup>4</sup> and again we find the writer evidently forcing himself to believe in the divine retribution,<sup>5</sup> and at other

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<sup>1</sup>Is. 57.1-2 gives us an interesting little side-light on the question. "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his righteousness."

<sup>2</sup>Cf. supra p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. also Ps. 5.4-8; 7.11-16; 9.8,16; 15 entire; 32.10; 45.4,7; 50.16-23; 52 entire; 75.8,10; 97.10-11; 119.119; 128 entire; 145.20; 146.9; 147.6. Cf. 125.3, "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity," where the complaint of Theognis (supra p. 202) is perhaps implicit in the denial.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. 5.9-12; 6 entire; 7.9; 10 entire; 12 entire; 28.3-5; 35 entire; 44.9-26; 58, esp. v.11; 59.2-13; 94.1-7; 140 entire.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ps. 4, esp. v.5-6, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness ... There be many that say, who will shew us any good. Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Cf. Ps. 55.

times appealing to his righteousness as the reason why God should deliver him, as in Ps. 7.3-5, "O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ... let the enemy persecute my soul and take it."<sup>1</sup>

But most frequently we have the feeling expressed that while the wicked flourish now, yet in the end they shall be overthrown and the righteous exalted; as in the eleventh Psalm, "The wicked bend their bow ..." and then triumphantly, "The Lord is in his holy temple ... his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men" and so on to the end.<sup>2</sup> One of the very finest statements of this view is Psalm 37: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." And again, "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread," and "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and lo, he was not; yea I sought him but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." If there is any lack of spirituality there it is counterbalanced by the adamant faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. The writer of such a poem was certainly "not far from the kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also 17.1 ff; 26 entire; 18.20-6; 59.2-3; 66.18-19.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also 9.12-20; 34.12-22, esp. v.19, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

<sup>3</sup>Cf. also Ps. 64 entire; 92.7,12-14; 94 passim, 112 entire, esp. vv.9-10. Cf. Ecclesiasticus 40 and 44.

Perhaps as fine is the seventy-third Psalm. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had wellnigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." The psalmist describes the insolence and prosperity of these wicked and then complains, "Verily I have cleaned my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency." But in the second part of the psalm he turns the other side of the picture. "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction." And is there perhaps in this psalm a more spiritual touch, especially in the later verses, "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Can it be that here the psalmist is thinking not of the usual material rewards supposed to follow upon righteousness and piety but has caught a glimpse of the higher reward, fellowship with the divine and the consciousness of God's approval here and hereafter? One would like to think so. And it is tempting to read the same feeling into Psalm 16.5-11, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup ... Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore;" and also Psalm 17.15, where the poet after deploring the wickedness of the "men of the world which have their portion in this life" concludes, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with



thy likeness."<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of references to the problem in Ecclesiastes.<sup>2</sup> The practical wisdom of the son of Sirach and Proverbs, as we have seen, almost ignores it, and preaches chiefly that on the whole honesty is the best policy and that the Lord recompenses righteousness and wickedness as a matter of course. But the supreme statement of the question in Hebrew literature is the book of Job, which is as different in tone from the prophets and Psalms as Euripides is from Aeschylus and Sophocles.<sup>3</sup> Job who "was perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil" by a succession of calamities loses all his wealth, all his children, and is finally stricken with a terrible and as it seems incurable disease. His colloquies with the friends who come to comfort him attempt to thrash out the problem. The friends speak in the tone of the Psalms, "Remember, I pray thee," says Eliphaz, "who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same," etc. (ch. 4.7 ff.). And again, "I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his habitation. His children are far from safety and they are crushed in the gate... Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth," and then he enumerates the usual blessings, safety from foes and famine and wild beasts; numerous progeny and a ripe old age (ch. 5). But these things are so evidently not pertinent to Job's case that it seems as if Eliphaz is simply reciting bromides from his books of devotion. Bildad states the same view even more strongly

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<sup>1</sup>The last is sometimes taken as a profession of belief in immortality. Cf. Cheyne, Origin and Religious Content of the Psalter, p.388 f.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. 2.26; 8.11-14; 9.2-3; 12.14. Cf. infra p. 277.

<sup>3</sup>We shall here take the book as we have it, disregarding the controversies discussed above.

(ch. 8) and takes the inevitable next step growing out of the traditional view, that such calamities as Job's argue a secret or even unconscious sin in the sufferer.<sup>1</sup> He implies that Job's children were slain for their misdeeds (v.4) and adds, "If thou wert pure and upright surely now he would awake for thee and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous; though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase," and he elaborates this subject.

This is too much even for Job's proverbial patience and he repudiates the charge of wickedness indignantly, and says of God, "He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked" (9.22-4). And appealing to God he says, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand." (Cf. also 16.17). It is all a terrible puzzle to Job, hopeless misery and darkness, and he struggles to find a solution. Zophar, with his unimaginative orthodoxy repeats more strongly the charges of Bildad and the bro-mides of Eliphaz (ch.11). And Job in his bitterness of soul again states the other side (12.6). "The tabernacles of robbers prosper and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hand God bringeth abundantly," and so the conflict surges back and forth, the friends stating and restating the orthodox view, Job reiterating its falsity and seeking for some hold in the darkness.

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<sup>1</sup>This view was common among both Hebrews and Greeks. A calamity, especially an epidemic or adverse elements, was taken as proof that the deity had been offended. Cf. the pestilence in the first book of the Iliad and the Oedipus Tyrannus, the story of the Greek fleet delayed at Aulis, the storm in the story of Jonah, as well as the general attitude of the Hebrew prophets in national calamities. Cf. also Fritz Wehrli, Lathe Biosas, Teubner, 1931, p.13, "Wo also unerwartetes Unglück eintritt da muss ein vergessener Frevel sich rächen, und Solon wird demselben nachforschen, wie man von alters her in Griechenland nach einer Verletzung religiöser Pflichten suchte, wenn Missernte oder Krankheit das Land heimsuchte."

Eliphaz, like the psalmists again describes the uncertainty and danger of the wicked who "shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine and shall cast off his flower as the olive." Similarly Bildad (18.5 ff.). "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out," etc., and Zophar (20.5 ff.) "The triumphing of the wicked is short and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment... he shall fly away as a dream and shall not be found... His children shall seek to please the poor," etc. All these are powerful and excellent speeches in themselves, but in the face of Job's misery they are monstrously tactless and uncharitable. The friends would have done better, as Job suggested, to be silent before the evident mystery (13.5). Finally Eliphaz, angered at Job's lack of submissiveness, accuses him of every sin in the register (22.5-10) and exhorts him to repentance, and Zophar (25) reiterates that the worm man cannot be justified with God or pure in his sight, and that every man merits all calamities that could befall him.

There is nothing new in all these remarks, and little more in the speeches of Elihu, who takes up the cudgels when the three have exhausted their store of wisdom. However Elihu does suggest the answer that afflictions are sent as warnings against pride and carelessness, to check or guide a man in his course (33.14-18 ff.). "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. But then for several chapters he elaborates the same old theme (34.12), "Yea, God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment." Man's righteousness is nothing. He must be humble and acknowledge as deserved all his misfortunes. "There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves (34.22-3). For he will not lay upon man more than right that he should enter into judgment with God" -

words that match in nobility some of the Psalms, but when spoken to Job in his agony prove a great lack of sympathetic imagination on the part of the speaker.

There is some question as to the solution that Job himself reaches. In one passage he touches upon a suggestion fraught with great significance for the future of the problem. "If a man die," says Job (14.13-15) "shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." That would solve the problem, if there were a life to come where things were readjusted and righteousness rewarded. But it is only a glimpse here. Job rejects it as far too daring an hypothesis. Death is an eternal sleep (17.13-16), a shadowy realm without joy or pain (3.13-23). The much quoted passage, "I know that my redeemer liveth," etc. (19.25-7), which is very obscure and uncertain as to text, is regarded by almost all scholars as having nothing to do with a resurrection, but merely expressing Job's feeling that at some time, probably before his death, or perhaps after, his righteousness will be made manifest to the world, and God will acknowledge his innocence. But after these gleams of hope Job constantly falls back into doubt and misery. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them..." and so on (21.7 ff.) in the most powerful statement of the problem that has ever been uttered. The second half of this chapter has occasioned much comment. After his eloquent outburst Job suddenly turns to the other side and continues, "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out ... they are as stubble before the wind." That sounds



much more like the friends, and numerous commentators insist that a speech of Bildad or Zophar has here been attributed to Job by mistake or more probably by an orthodox editor who wanted to put such sentiments in the mouth of Job. vv.19-21 are of interest because they have been interpreted as a protest against the punishment for the sins of the fathers. "God layeth up his iniquity for his children," Some commentators take vv.20 and 21 as a repudiation of the old doctrine, in tone like that of Theognis (supra p. 210). A man should see his own punishment; after his death he doesn't know anything of what happens to his children. In chapter 24 Job reverts to his complaints of the wicked and the hopelessness of life. But in chapter 27 he rises to a nobler height and exclaims: "God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go," and he follows it with another speech on the eventual ruin of the wicked. Then comes his ode on the unsearchableness of wisdom and two chapters of wistful recalling of his former prosperity and sorrow over his present misery. And then he again confidently and triumphantly asserts his righteousness and concludes with a challenge (31.35): "Oh, that one would hear me, behold my desire is that the Almighty would answer me and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown to me..." and the writer adds, "So these three men ceased to answer Job because he was righteous in his own eyes."

Taking this part of the poem by itself, as many do, the solution that Job reaches seems similar to that of Oedipus at Colonus, a triumphant conviction that his afflictions are not the punishment for any fault of his own, but part of the inscrutable mystery of life. The appearance of Jehovah adds scarcely anything

toward the solution of the problem. He merely overwhelms Job with the enumeration of his powers and quizzes him unmercifully, and Job is humbled and recants saying, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee; I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." This ending would tend to bear out the arguments of the friends and especially Elihu, and many commentators have found it unsatisfactory and inconsistent with the trend and tone of the colloquies.

The prologue and epilogue suggest other solutions. There we have the Lord permitting the calamities to fall upon Job in order to find out whether Job's piety is truly disinterested or of the "do ut des" variety. And at the end when Job proves steadfast and does not let his misfortunes make him impious the Lord restores all his possessions threefold. That would be the old traditional solution, somewhat as we have it in the story of Joseph, - the misfortunes of the righteous are sent by God as a trial of his faith and he shall be rewarded in the end. But many modern commentators do not think the prologue and epilogue integral parts of the work, but consider them unworthy of the loftier and more philosophical tone of the colloquies. Moreover, if God is omniscient why would it be necessary for him to let these calamities befall Job to see if he will prove faithful? It doesn't seem quite fair.

The personage of Satan suggests another solution. Though in the book of Job he is only one of the many sons of God, with a strong touch of cynicism and a taste for mischief, who can do nothing without God's permission, he is on the way to becoming the devil of later religion, the spirit of evil, which the Hebrews perhaps borrowed from the Persian Ahriman, the power of darkness and wickedness, independent of and opposed to the otherwise all-powerful spirit of light and goodness, Ahura-Mazda or God. With

that dualism in religion the problem would cease to exist. But it is rather interesting that the Jewish and Christian religions have hesitated to use the devil as much as they well might, but have preferred the, as it seems, less worthy view of God as expressed by Isaiah (45.7), "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things," - which has left them with the problem of evil, that logically and theologically they have never completely explained, except perhaps by referring it to a life to come.<sup>1</sup>

The finest discussion of the problem in Greek literature we find in the tenth book of Plato's Laws, which curiously enough, commentators on Job do not mention. The treatment and the style are entirely different, but the problem is the same. As a pro-emium to the law concerning impiety Plato here gives us a superb theodicy to "justify the ways of God to man" and convert those who doubt of divine providence. He addresses such an imagined youth as follows (888 A-D):

Child, you are young. As time goes on it will make you change many of your opinions and take opposite views. So wait until then to judge matters of supreme importance. And the supreme thing is that which you now disregard - namely, having the right opinions about the gods and so living nobly or otherwise. First of all let me tell you that you and your friends are not the first who have held this view of the gods, but there are always some afflicted with this disease. But no one ever adopted in his youth this opinion, that there are no gods and clung to it until old age, though some do keep the other two opinions, that though the gods exist, they pay no attention to men, or else that they are easily appeased by sacrifices and prayers.

He then undertakes to prove that soul is prior and superior to body, since belief in the supremacy of soul is the first prerequisite of piety. When he has proved this to his satisfaction he continues (896 D ff.): If soul is prior to body then it is the cause of all things, good and evil, fair and foul, just and unjust,

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the whole question cf. also Arthur S. Peake, The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament, London, 1904.

and controls all things, including the heavens - not one soul, but at least two, the beneficent soul and the maleficent. Wishes, thoughts, opinions and emotions are all motions of soul and they govern material things. Now if the motions of the heavens and the earth are regular and like the movements of reason then they are controlled by the wise and good soul, but if they are mad and disorderly, by the evil soul. The first is certainly the case; and the souls that guide the stars we shall call gods.

Now as for the man who believes there are gods but thinks them careless of human affairs, him, says Plato, we must admonish as follows (899 D ff.):

You believe in the gods because the divine element within you draws you toward its like. But the fortunes of wicked men, both in public and private, which, though they are not really happy, are counted happy by public opinion and in literature, drive you to impiety; and when you see men who have committed crimes risen to the highest rank, growing old and leaving behind them their children's children in the highest honors, you are troubled and not wishing to blame the gods for these things, you come to your present opinion that the gods scorn and neglect human affairs.

Then he attempts to refute this opinion. It was agreed that the gods are perfectly good and that they are in charge of the universe. Neglect, idleness and indolence are not good but evil. Hence it is unthinkable that God should have these characteristics. If a man in charge of some thing cares for large matters but neglects the small<sup>1</sup> he is not praiseworthy. He does this either because he thinks the small things make no difference to the whole or because he is lazy. Now the gods know and hear and see all things and can do all things and they certainly cannot be lazy. Man is the most god-fearing of all creatures and a possession of the gods. No physician or pilot or commander or artisan neglects the details of his business, and we must never think the gods in-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eurip. fr. 964.



ferior to mortal craftsmen. He who cares for the universe has ordered all things for the safety and perfection of the whole, and each part as far as possible fares as it is fitting it should. There are rulers set over each part, however small, and man's part, infinitesimal though it may be, also works toward the whole, that the life of the universe may be as happy as possible. Man is created for the sake of the whole, not it for his sake. And if you are troubled, not knowing how your fortunes work toward the best of the whole and of yourself too, remember that the soul, now joined to one body, now to another, undergoes many changes, and the divine draughts-player only shifts the character that grows better into a better place and that which grows worse into a worse. Our king knew that soul includes good and evil, the one tending always to benefit, the other to harm, and so he arranged where each might help toward the victory of the good and the defeat of evil. But the rest he left to our own will, for each of us a rule becomes that which he desires to be. All things possessed of soul are constantly changing to a greater or less degree; when the change is great and for the worse they move toward the lower regions and Hades, and when for the better towards a higher and better place. This is the law of the Olympian gods, that as you grow worse you move toward worse souls, and when better toward the better, and in life or death you fare as you should. This law you cannot escape, and you will not be neglected by the gods. though you dive into the depths of the earth or soar up to heaven,<sup>1</sup> but you shall pay the fitting penalty whether you stay on earth or have passed to Hades or to an even more dread place. And this

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<sup>1</sup>905 A. Cf. Ps. 139.7 ff., Job 34.22; Amos 9.2-3; Eurip. Hippol. 1290 f., and perhaps Aesch. Eumen. 175 and 338-40.

rule also holds for the wicked whom you saw flourishing, as you thought. You know not how they contribute to the perfection of the whole. Prayers and sacrifices to the gods on the part of the wicked do not avail. The gods are not, as some say, merciful to the wicked if they give them a share of the spoils. Such a conception of divinity is utterly false and impious.

Plato, as we see, attacks the problem logically or dialectically, not so much emotionally as does the writer of Job, and he disregards material rewards and punishments almost entirely. It is the place and condition of the soul that is of supreme importance. We can understand this better if we recall the argument of his Republic, where he shows that even though the righteous man were utterly miserable from the material point of view, yet he is in far better state than the wicked man in his prosperity, for righteousness is health of soul. In the tenth book of the Republic he does add that as a rule the righteous are honored and rewarded by gods and men (612-13), but that is only incidental. And he suggests another thing, that sometimes misfortunes are the result of sins committed in a former life (613 A). But there too he says that the chief thing is to live and choose so that the soul will become more righteous, and not to let ourselves be blinded by outward prosperity (618 DE, 621 C). Of course Plato's argument depends to some extent on the belief in the immortality of the soul, but it holds even apart from that, as the first nine books of the Republic prove.

Plato does not try scientifically to explain the problem of evil. He knows that it is not a thing that can be so explained. In the Theaetetus (176 A) he (Socrates) remarks:

But it cannot be that evil shall perish, for there must ever be something opposite to the good.<sup>1</sup> Nor can we place it among

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Lysis 220 E-221 A.

the gods, but of necessity it hovers about the mortal nature and this region. Therefore we should try to escape it and flee thither as speedily as we may. But the flight is the growing like to God as much as possible.

We see that he does not attribute the evil to God. In the Laws we have the dualism of good and evil soul. In the Republic (617 DE) the souls choose their own lot and genius and the prophet proclaims: "Virtue is without master. Of her each one shall have according as he honors or dishonors her. The blame is with the chooser; God is blameless."

If we look for a moment at the New Testament we find that the Gospels do not actually discuss the problem. Jesus seems to overleap it, only occasionally referring to it, as in Matthew 18.7, "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." But he definitely repudiates the view of Job's friends, saying to the Jews (Luke 13.2 f.): "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? ... Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay." And when his followers ask him of the man born blind, "Who did sin, this man or his parents that this has come upon him?" he replies, "Neither did he sin nor his parents, but that the power of God might be revealed in him." Jesus like Plato relies to some extent on the belief in immortality, but like Plato is practically free from other-worldliness. During the time of the Maccabaeen Wars the wretched lot of the martyrs forced the Jews to look for rewards elsewhere than in this world, and they simply transferred their material blessings to the resurrection<sup>1</sup> and that doctrine became the common one among the Jews and among

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. infra p. 303.

Christians in later times. It quite solved the problem for those who were not very spiritually minded. Jesus seems to use it in the beatitudes, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you ... for great is your reward in heaven." But he does not greatly emphasize it or make it the basis of his teaching, but rather says, "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow after me. He that findeth his life shall lose it and he that loses his life shall find it... What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is the joy of serving God and loving him that he emphasizes. And he seems to be displeased at the attitude of James and John (Mark 3.5 f.) when they ask that in his kingdom they may sit on either side of him, and says, "Ye know not what ye ask... To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Here there seems to be a hint of the tone of Plato's Laws. He promises his disciples persecution and suffering (John 16.20 ff.): "Ye shall weep and lament ... but your sorrow shall be turned into joy ... and your joy no man taketh from you... In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

His own sufferings do not shake his faith in God's goodness and love, but he speaks of them as "the cup which my Father hath given me," (John 18.11) and feels that his suffering and death will glorify him and benefit others. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12.24), - which is in substance the solution in Sophocles' Philoctetes. Similarly he says to his disciples (John 15.2), "Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." And so



the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of him (2.10), "For it became him for whom are all things... to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," and (5.8-9) "Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The same spirit is reflected in the other epistles. We read in James 1.2-4, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," and in Romans 8.17, "If so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together."<sup>1</sup> In these cases of course the writer is probably looking forward to a recompense at the judgment to come. And that is the attitude in general of the apostles and the early Christians, and is reflected in the book of Revelation. They who "came out of great tribulation" are before the throne of God, who "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

But sometimes in his moments of exaltation Paul touches a higher chord, gloriously inconsistent with his unworthy remark that "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15.19). So in Romans 5.3-5 he exclaims, "But we glory in tribulations also, for tribulation worketh patience and patience experience and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost," and in Romans 8.28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," which is quite in the tone of Plato's Republic 613 AB, - and then kindling more and more he continues:

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. also 1 Pet. 2.21; 4.1; 2 Tim. 2.12.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The problem lived on through the centuries. We find an interesting discussion of it in Menander (apud Norwood, Greek Comedy, p.349), which gives us a kind of compromise between the Epicurean view that the gods live in divine bliss without taking any thought for mortals, and Plato's idea that we must work out our own salvation by living the spiritual or philosophical life. One of Menander's characters says to another:

Do you imagine the gods have such abundant leisure that they allot evil and good to each person day by day? Let me explain. There are in the world approximately one thousand cities, each inhabited by thirty thousand people. Do the gods damn or save each of these individually? Impossible. That would mean a toilsome life indeed! Then do not the gods take thought for us? you may object. To each of us they assign, as commandant of the citadel, his character which dwells within and damns one man if he outrages it, but saves another. This character is the god in our life, the cause of each man's prosperity or ruin. Propitiate it by avoiding eccentric and misguided conduct so that you may prosper.

The Stoics tried to escape the problem by shutting their eyes to it and denying all legitimacy or reality to suffering and pain; many Christians solved it for themselves by looking for their reward in heaven and thinking with satisfaction of the wicked doomed to hell. During the Middle Ages it slept more or less, but the modern questioning spirit revived it again. Yet no one seems to have found a better solution than Plato and Jesus, and Paul in his supreme moments. And the most thoughtful of nineteenth century poets can only echo them.

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
Of pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.

That nothing walks with aimless feet,  
That not one life shall be destroyed  
Or cast as rubbish to the void  
Till God hath made the pile complete.











